

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN CANADA

*How the fine arts of bafflegab and procrastination
hobble the people who will be trying to save you when
things get really bad...*

Report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence



Committee Members

Sen. Colin Kenny – Chair
Sen. David Tkachuk – Deputy Chair
Sen. Tommy Banks
Sen. Joseph A. Day
Sen. Grant Mitchell
Sen. Michael A. Meighen
Sen. Wilfred P. Moore
Sen. Nancy Ruth
Sen. Rod A. A. Zimmer

Volume 1
Second Session
Thirty-ninth Parliament
2008

The report *Emergency Preparedness in Canada* is comprised of four volumes.
The first volume contains the committee's findings, observations and recommendations.
Volumes 2, 3 and 4 contain the responses to an emergency preparedness questionnaire received from 92 of the 100 municipalities surveyed by the committee.

All four volumes are available online at www.sen-sec.ca.
Hard copies are available upon request.

For more information, please contact:
Committee website: www.sen-sec.ca
Clerk of the committee: defence@sen.parl.gc.ca
Toll free: 1-800-267-7362

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**THE STANDING SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL
SECURITY AND DEFENCE
39th Parliament, 2nd Session**

The Honourable Colin Kenny
Chair

The Honourable David Tkachuk
Deputy Chair

and

The Honourable Senators:

Tommy Banks
Joseph A. Day
Michael A. Meighen
Grant Mitchell
Wilfred P. Moore
Nancy Ruth
Rod A.A. Zimmer

*The Honourable Marjory Lebreton, P.C.
(or the Honourable Gerald Comeau)

*The Honourable Céline Hervieux-Payette, P.C.
(or the Honourable Claudette Tardif)

*Ex Officio Members

Other Senators who have participated from time to time on this study:
The Honourable Senators Dallaire, Downe, Massicotte, Nolin, Peterson
and Segal

Special Advisors to the Committee:

MGen (ret) Keith McDonald and Barry Denofsky

Library of Parliament Research Staff:

Melissa Radford, Maureen Shields, Jason Yung and Steven James

Clerks of the Committee:

Shaila Anwar and Gaëtane Lemay

ORDER OF REFERENCE

Extract from the *Journals of the Senate*, Tuesday, November 20, 2007:

The Honourable Senator Kenny moved, seconded by the Honourable Senator Banks:

That the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence be authorized to examine and report on the national security policy of Canada. In particular, the committee shall be authorized to examine:

(a) the capability of the Department of National Defence to defend and protect the interests, people and territory of Canada and its ability to respond to and prevent a national emergency or attack, and the capability of the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to carry out its mandate;

(b) the working relationships between the various agencies involved in intelligence gathering, and how they collect, coordinate, analyze and disseminate information and how these functions might be enhanced;

(c) the mechanisms to review the performance and activities of the various agencies involved in intelligence gathering; and

(d) the security of our borders and critical infrastructure;

That the papers and evidence received and taken and work accomplished by the committee on this subject since the beginning of the First session of the Thirty-seventh Parliament be referred to the committee; and

That the committee report to the Senate no later than March 31, 2009 and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until 90 days after the tabling of the final report.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

Paul C. Bélisle
Clerk of the Senate

National Emergencies

Alarmist Committee Attempts to Terrify Canadians!

Again!

Hey, we're not trying to terrify anybody.

That having been said, stuff happens. Emergencies happen. Not often enough to put Canadians on a war footing, ready to run to the closest bomb shelter at a moment's notice. But often enough that intelligent people with ample resources should use some of those resources to prepare themselves, to defend themselves against tragedy.

Prepare for what?

Earthquakes. Power failures. Explosions. Infectious disease outbreaks. Gas leaks. Tainted water supplies. Terrorist attacks. Cyber breakdowns. Nuclear meltdowns. Tsunamis. Crazy gunmen. Forest fires. Floods.

Those are a few. They don't happen often and they mostly happen to other people, but sometimes they come to Canada. Some can be pre-empted. Some can't. All can be prepared for – minimizing the risk that they will turn into disasters.

So we on the Senate Committee for National Security and Defence would like to go on record: the sky is not falling. Actually, we would like to go on record twice: The sky is not falling but somewhere soon in Canada it will seem like it is, and Canadian governments are not moving quickly enough to minimize the damage.

Years have passed since the wakeup calls of July 21, 1987 (Edmonton Tornado), July 20, 1996 (Saguenay River floods in Quebec), April 29, 1997 (Red River floods in Manitoba), January 9, 1998 (ice storms in eastern Ontario and western Quebec), September 11, 2001 (terrorists attacks in Manhattan and Washington, DC), March 5, 2003 (SARS epidemic in Toronto), August 14, 2003 (largest power blackout in North American history), September 28, 2003 (Hurricane Juan, Nova Scotia)

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...this is a partial list.

During the intervening years various orders of government have inched toward improved national coordination for disaster relief, but even “inched” often seems like a generous word, used here only because “centimetered” hasn’t come into common usage.

In the following pages the Committee has examined governments’ efforts to improve Canada’s disaster preparation and disaster response capacity, in areas such as

- continuity of essential government services during emergencies
- the capacity of the Canadian Forces to offer assistance during emergencies
- the usefulness of emergency caches scattered about the country
- funding municipalities for emergency equipment and training
- collaboration among federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments
- archiving lessons learned and best practices
- emergency public communications
- policing during emergencies

The Committee has been assisted in examining these issues by the testimony of more than 110 witnesses from 2001-2008 who testified in Ottawa and other locations, as well as two emergency preparedness surveys – the first of which was conducted in 2003, and the second in 2007. This report draws primarily on the most recent survey, responded to by 92 municipal emergency coordinators. The survey asked about their ability to deal with emergencies, their perception of how well senior levels of government are performing in preparation for emergencies, plus the gaps they believe should be filled to improve Canada’s capacity to deal with emergencies.

Our report focuses on what governments have done in recent years to ready us for the next big one.

Sadly, for the most part, this is not a heroic story.

Emergency Preparedness

Problem 1:

Lack of Emergency Management

The Problem as We Saw It in 2004: Federal departments were not being tested to ensure that essential government operations can continue to function effectively during and following an emergency. Apparently the breakdowns that occurred during the blackout in central and eastern Canada in August 2003 did not serve as a lesson learned. No politician or bureaucrat should ever be allowed to forget that during this crisis – when the Prime Minister’s Office should have been operating at peak efficiency – the PMO was working by candlelight.

COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATION (2004)

- **The Committee recommended that Public Safety Canada conduct evaluations to ensure that all federal departments and agencies are able to continue to operate during a crisis and that their preparedness plans are in effect.¹**

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS (2006 – 2008)

Two and a half years later – on August 20, 2006 – Public Safety Canada² responded in writing to the Committee’s 2004 recommendation:

“Under section 4(1) (a) (b) (c) of Bill C-12 (the proposed *Emergency Management Act*), the Public Safety Minister would establish policies, programs and other measures and provide advice on the preparation, maintenance, testing and implementation of Government of Canada emergency management plans.

¹ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada’s Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 64. See recommendation 17 A - This sub-recommendation is a part of a larger recommendation that is dealt with below. The sub-recommendation is separated here because of its importance.

² Public Safety Canada was known as Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC) until 2007. In this report, the Committee will utilize the new name, but will not edit any external text that refers to the old PSEPC.

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These plans would also be analyzed and evaluated. The Bill further states, under section 6 (a) (b) that all Government of Canada ministers would prepare, maintain, test and implement emergency management plans within their area of responsibility according to the policies, programs and measures established by the Public Safety Minister.”³

The *Emergency Management Act* was passed on June 22nd, 2007,⁴ giving the Minister of Public Safety the authority to “establish policies, programs and other measures and provide advice on the preparation, maintenance, testing and implementation of Government of Canada emergency management plans.” So what has been done?

On September 19, 2007, Library of Parliament researchers⁵ followed up with Public Safety Canada by asking “what work has been done on the ‘emergency management plans’ that the Public Safety Minister has been given authority to establish?” Five months later, on February 26, 2008, came this reply:

“Public Safety Canada (PS) has established an Emergency Management Planning Unit that provides a strategic focus for planning activities. The first activity undertaken by this unit was to spearhead the negotiation of the North American Plan for Avian and Pandemic Influenza with Mexico and the United States.

Section 6(2) (c) of the Emergency Management Act (EMA) indicates that an emergency management plan includes ‘any programs, arrangements or other measures to provide for the continuity of the operations of the government institution in the event of an emergency’. In the Government of Canada such plans are commonly referred to as Business Continuity Plans (BCPs). In addition to the EMA, both the Government Security Policy and the National Security Policy require departments to have BCPs in place to ensure that the federal government can maintain critical service delivery to Canadians in the event of a disruption. Both of these policies are publicly available.

³ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg. 16.

⁴ *The Emergency Management Act*, First Session, Thirty-ninth Parliament, 55-56 Elizabeth II, 2006-2007. For a text of the Act, please see <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?pub=bill&doc=C-12&parl=39&ses=1&language=E>

⁵ The September 19, 2007 Library of Parliament correspondence with Public Safety Canada was conducted during a period of prorogation (which lasted from September 14, 2007 – October 16, 2007). During prorogation, the House of Commons and the Senate of Canada, as well as their committees, are dissolved. The Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence was not reconstituted until November 13, 2007. Correspondence pertaining to this report that is dated to this time was conducted by the Library of Parliament at the request of Senator Colin Kenny, who is the current Chair of the Committee.

With respect to Business Continuity Plans (BCP), the NSP [National Security Policy] gives PS the responsibility to: ‘...review [sic] the plans of federal departments to ensure their ability to continue operating during emergencies.’

The GSP [Government Security Policy] states that ‘Departments must establish a business continuity planning (BCP) program to provide for the continued availability of critical services and assets, and of other services and assets when warranted by a threat and risk assessment.’⁶

CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT (2008)

Still No Assurance that the Feds Will Function in a Crisis

A North American Pandemic Plan was needed, and the Committee congratulates the Emergency Planning Management Unit for playing a leadership role in putting one in place.

Now, getting back to the Committee’s recommendation: Has Public Safety Canada conducted evaluations to ensure that all federal departments and agencies are able to continue to operate during a crisis and that their preparedness plans are in effect? Has it audited the Business Continuity Plans of other departments to ensure that they have the systems in place to get through an emergency?

Public Safety Canada’s 2008 response says that every department is *required* to have a Business Continuity Plan, and it also tells us that Public Safety Canada has the *responsibility* to review these plans. But does every department really have one, and has every department been tested by Public Safety Canada to assure that their plan is workable?

⁶ Public Safety Canada, “Follow UP Questions for Public Safety Canada regarding: Recommendations and PSEPC/Portfolio Responses to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence (SCONSAD)’ (August 30, 2006),” February 26, 2008. pg 1.

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We do not know the answers to these questions, but as the Auditor General wrote while examining the emergency plans of Public Safety Canada in April 2005:

Section 7 of the *Emergency Preparedness Act*⁷ requires that departments prepare emergency response plans for areas within their mandates. We noted a potential, as emergencies develop and implicate more departments and agencies, for conflict between having to work together with other departments and supporting the line responsibilities of their own mandates.

Officials at PSEPC could not show us an inventory of departmental emergency response plans that could be activated in the event of a CBRN terrorist event. Nor could they provide us with an analysis showing how, in a complex emergency involving several departments, the plans would work together to achieve a seamless federal response.⁸

Like the Auditor General, the Committee has not been shown evidence that federal departmental emergency plans even exist.

No plan is worth the paper it is written on if the components of the plan have not been implemented. And even if the plan has been implemented, it is unreliable by definition unless it has been tested. The Committee presumes that if systems were in place and had been tested, the responses would say that. They don't. We simply have no evidence that implementation and testing has taken place. This means Canadians have no assurance that essential government operations will function during emergencies.

⁷ The 2007 *Emergency Management Act* replaces parts of the 1985 *Emergency Preparedness Act* to “strengthen the Government of Canada’s response to emergencies through enhanced planning activities under a standardized framework and a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities of federal Ministers.” The *Emergency Preparedness Act* remains the primary source of emergency management legislation. For more information on the two Acts, please see Public Safety Canada, “FAQ – Tabling of the proposed Emergency Management Act,” Available at <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/media/nr/2006/nr20060508-3-eng.aspx>

⁸ Auditor General of Canada, “Chapter 2—National Security in Canada—The 2001 Anti-Terrorism Initiative—Air Transportation Security, Marine Security, and Emergency Preparedness” in *Report of the Auditor General of Canada*, (Office of the Auditor General of Canada: April 2005), pg 21. Available at http://209.71.218.213/internet/English/aud_ch_oag_200504_2_e_14933.html

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee recommends that:

- 1. Public Safety Canada table an annual report in Parliament documenting the Business Continuity Plan of each government department and agency, and provide evidence whether they have been implemented and tested, and that the results be made publicly available.**
- 2. If Public Safety Canada is unable or unwilling to table such a report, a third party national security auditor be appointed to do so.**

Problem 2:
Use of the Canadian Forces
for Domestic Emergencies

The Problem as We Saw It in 2004: The Canadian Forces Regular Force and Reserves had not been assigned a role in Canada's emergency preparedness. There were no assurances that the Forces would respond to an emergency if they were needed, even though many Canadians took it for granted that they would. Lieutenant-Colonel Blair McGregor told the Committee during a visit to Vancouver in 2003 that "People in the local area . . . look to [us] as a source of immediate disaster relief . . . We do not train for that and we are not funded for it."

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS (2004)

- **The Committee recommended that the Canadian Forces should enhance their capabilities to respond to national emergencies by:**
 - **Ensuring that the Regular Forces are equipped and trained to deal with significant emergencies in Canada and that they are involved in regional emergency planning;**
 - **Expanding the role of the Militia to be a civil defence force capable of quickly aiding local authorities in the event of a national emergency;**
 - **Involving the Militia in emergency planning and training in conjunction with municipalities across the country;**
 - **Equipping and training the Militia for emergency preparedness operations.**

- **The Committee recommended that Public Safety Canada:**
 - **Include the Canadian Forces Militia in the national inventory of emergency preparedness resources; and provide first responders with details of the Militia’s assets and capabilities.⁹**

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE (2006)

In response to the recommendation that the Regular Forces “be equipped and trained to deal with significant emergencies in Canada and that they are involved in regional emergency planning,” the Department of National Defence (DND) wrote on August 14, 2006:

“The Department of National Defence (DND) and the CF work diligently with other departments and agencies to help ensure the safety and security of Canada and Canadians. The Government has plans and response capabilities in place to protect Canada and Canadians – DND and the CF stand ready to assist other Government departments and agencies when asked.”

But Talk Needs Walk

This response was at least somewhat encouraging. Clearly there had been progress in formatting a role for the Canadian Forces in response to national emergencies. And communications have improved between the Forces and municipalities about what can be expected during emergencies.

Improved communications between the Forces and municipalities is a starting point: 85 percent of respondents to the Committee’s survey of municipalities said they “expected” support from the military, although only 46 percent said they had “liaised” with the military about what to expect. This obviously is not a perfect communications record, but it represents a huge improvement considering that five years ago there was almost no liaison.

⁹ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada’s Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 35, 47. See recommendation #3 and recommendations #10, 11.

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The question, of course, is whether the military has developed significantly increased *capacity* to respond to domestic emergencies. More on that in the next few pages.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE (2006) con't.

To our recommendation that DND “expand the role of the Militia to be a civil defence force capable of quickly aiding local authorities in the event of a national emergency,” the department replied on August 14, 2006:

“In order to respond to new security threats, the CF continues to examine ways to introduce dual-role capabilities for the Reserves - such as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence - which could also help respond to domestic security threats. The Governor General’s Foot Guards and the Régiment de Hull trialled the concept for the army Reserves’ expanded Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) response and domestic defence capabilities in November 2004, with a good degree of success.

“More work is needed to build the capability to the point where it can be stood up on a permanent basis and spread across the nation. This capability is being developed within the Army’s capability development process and is being studied in conjunction with the overall CF requirement to provide such a capability. In addition to this capability, each Reserve Canadian Brigade Group has created a composite, company-sized organization that is capable of responding to regional situations as required when requested by the appropriate authorities through the accepted lines of communication.

“Nevertheless, due to the availability of reservists and their terms of employment; it is very likely that regular force organizations will be the first to respond to any given situation. As part of its Canada First defence strategy the government has indicated its intention to further enhance the capacity of the CF to respond to domestic emergencies. The 2006 Budget included funds to initiate the establishment of territorial battalions.”¹⁰

¹⁰ Department of National Defence, “2006 Update on SCONSAD Recommendations,” August 14, 2006, 11-12.

Behind All the Gobbledygook, Where's the Beef?

The Committee is ever alert to phrasing like “the Canadian Forces continues to examine ways . . .” That’s bureaucratese for “ways have not yet been found.” Then again there are sentences like the following, dealing with the question of whether the Reserves will be given a CBRN¹¹ role:

“This capability is being developed within the Army’s capability development process and is being studied in conjunction with the overall CF requirement to provide such a capability.”

Did you follow that? Perhaps a capability is being developed. And perhaps it is being studied. And it is good that the reply acknowledges that such a capability is required. However, there is nothing here to suggest that there has been any progress toward actually *creating* such a capability, other than holding one exercise in the national capital area in 2004. That was four years ago.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE (2006) con’t.

In response to the Committee’s recommendation that DND “involve the Militia in emergency planning and training in conjunction with municipalities across the country,” the department responded on August 14, 2006:

“When complete, the Land Force Reserve Restructure (LFRR) will assist in ensuring the long-term relevance and effectiveness of the army Reserve and the CF as a whole. The purpose of the LFRR project is to develop an effective and credible army Reserve that both complements and supplements the regular force. In addition, the Army has begun deploying community-based contingency planning officers at unit and formation headquarters. These officers are becoming familiar with the emergency planning organizations within in their areas of responsibility, building regional lines of communication, educating the civil authorities and managing expectations as to what the CF can do, and facilitating planning for the application of military support should the need arise. Also, units have received the task to develop plans to form platoon-sized groups (Security Platoons) to be available on short notice for humanitarian assistance. Further, army Reservists trained for civil-military cooperation on expeditionary operations

¹¹ CBRN refers to capabilities pertaining to Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear materials.

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will also be very useful in coordinating army support to civil authorities in domestic operations.”¹²

Using Reserves Good Idea, But Reserves are in Short Supply

This reply sounds very constructive, and, as was noted earlier, it appears that communication with municipalities has genuinely improved. But exchanges of words are not enough. If the Canadian Forces are going to have “an effective and credible army Reserve that both complements and supplements the regular force” when emergencies arise, then somebody has to put trained and equipped people on the ground to perform when the crunch comes.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE (2006) con’t.

Regarding the recommendation that “the Reserve also be trained for emergency preparedness operations,” the department responded on August 14, 2006:

“The Government has recently announced an increase in reserve force personnel. This means that additional resources will be made available for civil preparedness, including an increase in capacity to deal with natural disasters and local emergencies. The Army foresees that the most pressing requirement for military personnel in the domestic security domain will be for disciplined, organized, pools of manpower; additional training for the provision of humanitarian assistance is not necessarily required, and current equipment levels are deemed to be sufficient.”¹³

It is true that in 2006 the government did announce a plan for a significant increase in personnel: 13,000 Regular Force personnel and 10,000 Reservists. This would result in an end state of 75,000 Regular Force members and 35,000 Primary Reservists paid strength, the first phase being to grow the Regular Force to 70,000 and Reserve Force paid strength to 30,000 over five years. That proposed increase might have given the Reserves the capacity to respond to national emergencies, which is what the Committee recommended.

¹² Department of National Defence, “2006 Update on SCONSAD Recommendations,” August 14, 2006, pg 12.

¹³ Department of National Defence, “2006 Update on SCONSAD Recommendations,” August 14, 2006, 13.

The October 2007 Speech from the Throne furthered this commitment stating:

“Ensuring our capacity to defend Canada’s sovereignty is at the heart of the Government’s efforts to rebuild the Canadian Forces. Canada’s men and women in uniform risk their lives for their country, and deserve the equipment and training required for a first-class, modern military. Our Government will modernize Canada’s military to provide effective surveillance and protection for all of our country, cooperate in the defence of North America, and meet our responsibilities abroad to the United Nations and our allies.”¹⁴

However, two weeks later DND’s Departmental Performance Report¹⁵ for the period ending March 31, 2007 quietly announced that sustained operational commitments in Afghanistan, preparing for Olympics 2010 and supporting CF transformation, has caused the Department to “re-profile” the planned expansion to 68,000 Regular Force and 26,000 Primary Reserve paid strength by fiscal 2011 to 2012. Apparently “re-profile” means “lower the target and add a year in the program.”

The announced target of increasing the Regular Forces by 13,000 to put 75,000 in place was cut in half – the current target is 7,000. The planned increase in the Reserves (from 25,000 to 35,000) was cut by 90 percent. That means an increase of just 1,000 reservists.

BOTTOM LINE: a 54 percent cut for the announced Regular Force increase and a 90 percent cut for the announced Reserve Force increase.

Finally, the most recent document to shed light on the recruitment plan – the Canada First Defence Strategy – was released on June 19, 2008. The plan has now reverted to the initial first phase of the Budget 2006 commitment of expanding the Canadian Forces to 70,000 Regular Force and 30,000 Reserve Force personnel. However, instead of accomplishing this over five years, as stated in Budget 2006, the government intends to meet this target by 2028 – adding just over 20 years to the original program.

¹⁴ The Governor General of Canada, *Strong Leadership. A Better Canada – Speech from the Throne*, October 16, 2007. Available at: <http://www.sft-ddt.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1364>

¹⁵ Department of National Defence, *2006-2007 Departmental Performance Report*, November 2007, pg. 13.

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Smaller Increase Over a Longer Time

All those announcements aren't going to get things done during emergencies if the capacity isn't actually there. Clearly the Canadian Forces had every intention of taking Canada First seriously. But with a commitment on increasing the size of the Forces that will only be attained in two decades, where's the beef?

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE (2006) con't.

Regarding the Committee's recommendation that Public Safety Canada include the Reserves in a national inventory of emergency preparedness resources, as well as to provide first responders with details of the Reserve's assets and capabilities, the department replied on August 30, 2006:

“Both Regular and Reserve components of the Canadian Forces (CF) play an important role in emergency management in Canada. When requested, the CF will provide assistance to civilian authorities. The composition of the CF response is the purview of CF authorities and as recent deployments have demonstrated, often involve both Regular and Reserve members. The CF, with PSEPC input, is examining where the Reserves can better assist civilian authorities in civil preparedness.

The CF is implementing a new command structure to better manage how it responds to threats at home and abroad. The domestic component, Canada Command, will enhance the CF's ability to respond to threats and emergencies in Canada. Canada Command and its six regional headquarters will be closely tied to provincial and territorial emergency management organizations within their respective regions, as well as to PSEPC regional offices.

PSEPC and DND have developed an interface between the Government Operations Centre, housed within PSEPC, and the new CF command structure, which includes the Strategic Joint Staff and Canada Command. PSEPC and DND/CF will continue to work closely together in planning for the use of the CF in responding to emergencies. The two departments are committed to maintaining an open dialogue with provincial and territorial authorities regarding the provision of CF assistance in the event of an emergency.”¹⁶

¹⁶ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg 12.

CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT (2008)

**Good Communications Cannot
Make Up for Lack of Capacity**

Better communications between the Canadian Forces and local emergency management officials is a good thing. But talk needs walk. Consider this: according to the Committee's survey, 85 percent of responding municipalities expect the Canadian Forces to play a role in their community in the event of a major disaster. But only 32 percent have included the Canadian Forces Reserves in their emergency plans. Why the disconnect? The surveys showed that too often municipal representatives, used to dealing with their provincial governments, feel uncomfortable approaching the federally-run military. There is generally no direct communication between municipalities and the federal government – any communications must trickle back and forth through the provinces.

At least our survey is telling us that the Canadian Forces have been taking the initiative by contacting communities to make them aware of what kind of support to expect in case of an emergency.

Again, the problem no longer appears to be flawed communications. It is lack of capacity to respond. The second paragraph of the Public Safety Canada reply refers to “the domestic component, Canada Command, [which] will enhance the Canadian Forces' ability to respond to threats and emergencies in Canada.” However, as the Committee will demonstrate next, a territorial response capability under Canada Command barely seems to exist.

A Dozen (Phantom?) Battalions

DND's Report on Plans and Priorities 2006-2007 said this:

“As part of the overall CF expansion, **four new Rapid Reaction Battalions** will also be created. The military will locate these units strategically across the country, in Comox, Trenton, Bagotville and Goose Bay to provide a Regular Force presence and to help ensure an effective response to natural disasters and terrorist attacks. The Forces will organize these units around key capacities that can be used locally, or transported rapidly to support Canadian Forces operations. Implementation will begin in 2006.”¹⁷

The Committee has been unable to retrieve any information as to whether “security platoons¹⁸” or these “rapid reaction battalions” are for real, or figments of someone’s hopeful imagination.

In the same document, the department said this:

“To better respond to domestic emergencies, the Land Force will also create a **territorial response capability** in centers such as Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Niagara-Windsor, Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City, Saint John, Halifax and St John’s. In addition, the Land Force, in conjunction with Canada COM, will identify other key capabilities in each region that could be used in a domestic emergency.”

“The territorial response capability that will eventually be formed will include full-time and part-time personnel in each location. To achieve this capability in an efficient and effective manner, the Land Force will review the current Reserve unit structure in each named location with a view to grouping and/or amalgamating units, as necessary. Where circumstances allow, the territorial battalions may also be supported by other Reserve components, as directed by Canada COM.”¹⁹

¹⁷ Department of National Defence, *2006-2007 Report on Plans and Priorities*, pg. 16.

¹⁸ “Security platoons” was referred to in the Department of National Defence’s August 14, 2006 response to SCONSAD recommendations on p. 11 of this report.

¹⁹ Department of National Defence, *2006-2007 Departmental Performance Report*, November 2007, pg. 17.

In DND's 2006-2007 Departmental Performance Report released a few months later, the department updates the public with this:

“The nuclei of Territorial Defence Battalion Groups have been established across Canada.”²⁰

A year later, the DND's Report on Plans and Priorities 2007-2008 added this:

“Force development work in support of a concept of territorial defence battalion groups regionally distributed across the country will lead to the establishment of initial cadres in six urban locations fiscal 2007-2008, with an expanded capability in fiscal 2008-2009. This initiative will support the Government of Canada's Canada First policy by creating a coordinated domestic response capability across the country.”²¹

The department's 2008-2009 Report on Plans and Priorities does mention “Territorial Battalions” once, but offers no descriptive update on their current status.²²

And finally, although the Government's Canada First Defence Strategy, released on June 19, 2008, identifies “respond(ing) to a major terrorist attack” and “support(ing) civilian authorities during a crisis in Canada such as a natural disaster” as two core missions for the Canadian Forces, the strategy does not mention anything about security platoons, rapid reaction battalions or territorial defence battalion groups.

Deal or No Deal?

When former Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor first announced the concept of the Territorial Defence Battalion Groups, he said they would be located in 12 Canadian cities. Each would be founded around a cadre of 100 Regular soldiers, around which Reserves would function. These units would be the essence of the “Canada First” concept, defending Canadians

²⁰ Department of National Defence, *2006-2007 Report on Plans and Priorities*, pg. 26.

²¹ Department of National Defence, *2007-2008 Report on Plans and Priorities*, pg. 22.

²² The Report states: “with respect to domestic operations, the Primary Reserve will continue to conduct coastal operations, air operations, as well as providing the personnel for Territorial Battalions.” See Department of National Defence, *2008-2009 Report on Plans and Priorities*, February 2008, pg. 48.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN CANADA

from attack on their home territory but also able to come to the rescue following natural disasters.

Notwithstanding the initial commitment, these battalions have not been established.

No such permanent units have been established. Why? On February 22, 2008 Lieutenant-General Andrew Leslie²³ told the Conference of Defence Associations that the Canadian Forces schools are short 200 personnel and that the current tempo has been unbelievably hard on them.²⁴ Lieutenant-General Leslie also told the Committee on June 2, 2008 that the Canadian Forces is currently short 1,000 non-commissioned officers – master corporals to be exact²⁵. You can't set up new units without commissioned officers to command them and non-commissioned officers to run them. The Committee has also learned that officers and other ranks have been “double-hatted”²⁶ in various Canadian locations, and told that they may be needed for emergency duties elsewhere in Canada from time to time.

The Army's incapacity to follow up on Mr. O'Connor's announcement of a dozen permanently located groups is just one manifestation of the Canadian Forces' continuing shortage of personnel. This comes right down to funding, retention and training capacity. The Speech from the Throne and the *Departmental Performance Report* make this clear: the Canadian Forces have barely enough people to handle the mission in Afghanistan, let alone expand their responsibilities domestically.

The Forces are now virtually the same size – approximately 64,000 – as they were in November 2002 when the Committee recommended a pause in foreign deployments because they

²³ Lieutenant-General Andrew Leslie is Commander of the Land Forces and responsible for army force generation.

²⁴ Lieutenant-General Andrew Leslie in a speech before the Conference of Defence Associations on February 22, 2008. The full speech can be viewed at <http://www.cpac.ca/forms/index.asp?dsp=template&act=view3&pagetype=vod&lang=e&clipID=983>

²⁵ Lieutenant-General Andrew Leslie, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, June 2, 2008, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

²⁶ “Double hatting” refers to someone or something that performs two roles.

were so over-stretched²⁷. Our recommendation was dismissed at the time because, it was said, a pause would be an embarrassment to Canada. But, embarrassment or not, the pause was implemented 20 months later²⁸ when everyone involved finally recognized that Canada's military was burned out.

Canada obviously cannot call a halt to foreign deployments now. Parliament has re-committed to Afghanistan until 2011, so a rebuilding pause is impossible. But nobody should try to pretend that the Canadian Forces aren't staggering under the same kind of debilitating over-extension that so weakened them during the two preceding governments.

Canada Command will fail in parts of its mandate until and unless a Canadian government finally provides our military with the funding required to come to the rescue of Canadians at home while serving their interests abroad. As a result, first responders cannot be assured that Canadian Forces personnel will be at the ready to give them a hand in times of crisis.

It's all in the Numbers

As mentioned, the Committee strongly believes that the Canadian Forces are dangerously short of personnel. For example, the Forces recruited 6,716 personnel in the fiscal year (2007-2008) as of December 2007. Unfortunately, to that point they had lost 6,088 personnel, resulting in a net increase of 628 personnel.²⁹ According to DND's Report on Plans and Priorities (2008-2009), the Forces are experiencing a higher attrition rate

²⁷ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *For an Extra \$130 Bucks ...an Update on Canada's Military Financial Crisis: a View From the Bottom Up*, (The Senate of Canada: November 2002), pg 20. See recommendation 2.

²⁸ The operational pause in overseas deployments of the Canadian Forces lasted from August 2004 to February 2006.

²⁹ Recruitment and attrition numbers in fiscal year 2007-2008 as of March 31, 2008 and were provided by the Department of National Defence through a Request for Information. Please see Appendix F for more details.

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than the historical norm³⁰. The document also acknowledges that “despite the success in recruiting over the past few years, higher attrition has hindered the Canadian Forces’ growth.”

Further, the Committee has been told that projected recruitment and attrition figures for the following years are looking dismal. In hearings, the Committee has heard that some of the challenges facing Canadian Forces retention include demographics and a strong Canadian economy.³¹ However, it has only been in private conversations that some Committee members and staff have heard the extent to which future figures are looking grim. Sources have explained that they could not speak publicly about these details because it is made clear to them to “stay in their lane” when speaking to Parliamentarians. Many fear that speaking candidly could potentially be career ending.

In its travels across the country, the Committee has also heard the tragic stories resulting from excessive strain: family breakups, missed training and personal development opportunities, and burnout, all of which leads to more attrition.

The financial situation for the department is only going to get worse due to the introduction of accrual accounting. Accrual accounting is designed to do a better job than cash accounting at smoothing out budgetary bumps that are sometimes created by spending on expensive military equipment. For example, in terms of equipment procurement, the impact on DND’s budgets is spread over the life of equipment.

The problem here is that any well-planned budget should have provisions for a contingency to confront the unexpected. Canada’s military never has any room left in its budgets because it is always cash starved. With accrual accounting, the money is locked in and if any surprises come up, Commanding Officers will have to take money from other already under-funded

³⁰ According to the Report, “Last year the attrition rate was 7.9% versus the historical rate, which hovered around 6.2 to 6.4%.” See Department of National Defence, *2008-2009 Report on Plans and Priorities*, February 2008, pg. 42.

³¹ Lieutenant-General W.J. Natynczyk, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, June 2, 2008, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

portfolios, such as personnel, and operations and maintenance (O&M).

Counting the money differently isn't going to put a dent in the performance of an under-funded organization.

The Canadian Forces is undertaking a number of complex international and domestic operations and duties. Did the Government bite off more than it could chew when it announced new domestic initiatives under the very alluring concept of putting a priority on defending Canadians at home through Canada Command?

It appears so.

While these new commitments remain so illusory, first responders have no way of knowing what they can actually expect from the Canadian Forces in times of crisis.

Problem 3: *Hidden Emergency Caches*

Health Canada's National Emergency Stockpile System (NESS) consists of a central depot in Ottawa, eight warehouses, and 1,300 pre-positioned supply caches strategically located across Canada, under the combined management of the provinces and the federal government.³²

Health Canada claims that the caches contain many things that one would expect to find in a hospital, from beds and blankets to a supply of pharmaceuticals and a range of antibiotics. This includes 165 "field hospitals", or mobile hospitals, with 200 beds in each. These are positioned throughout the country. The units can be deployed on short notice (within 24 hours) to be set up in existing buildings such as schools and community centres.

Additional capacities include supplies to set up first aid and triage stations. Pre-positioned supply centres have a mix of supplies depending on their location and anticipated emergencies that might occur.

The Problem as We Saw It in 2004: First responders often didn't know where the caches were, or what was in them. First responders had not been consulted on whether the contents of the caches matched what they needed or duplicated what they already had. Some emergency coordinators who had seen the caches told us that many of their contents were outdated.

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION (2004)

- **The Committee recommended that Health Canada overhaul the way it administers and manages the emergency caches it controls, with the aim of more efficiently and effectively aiding first responder agencies to help Canadians across the country. The overhaul should ensure, among other things, that local officials are:**

³² Public Health Agency of Canada, National Emergency Stockpile System, <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ep-mu/ness-eng.php>

Made aware of the locations of any caches in their vicinity;

Advised how to access the caches in emergencies;

Given a role in determining caches' contents; and

Encouraged to include the caches in their planning and training.³³

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDATIONS (2006 – 2007)**

In response to the Committee's 2004 recommendations, Health Canada wrote on August 2006:

“Health Canada (through PHAC [Public Health Agency of Canada]) is taking action as follows:

- Coordination and cooperation with the provinces and territories (P/Ts) are ongoing. The P/Ts continue to send us annual updates of custodian contact names and also inform us whenever a unit is to be moved. It is then the responsibility of the provincial or territorial (P/T) Emergency Health Services Director to have ongoing communications with local emergency managers and emergency personnel.
- Federal, provincial and territorial (F/P/T) protocols and agreements have been in place for some time with our P/T Emergency Health Services Director counterparts to ensure quick and easy access to the National Emergency Stockpile System (NESS).
- The contents of the supply locations are well known to all the P/T Emergency Health Services Directors who have approved access to NESS.
- A NESS F/P/T Strategic Review Working Group is undertaking a strategic review of NESS and based on the recommendations of the Working Group, NESS will be making the necessary medical supply and equipment purchases to support existing NESS components.

³³ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 35. See recommendation #5.

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- Three orientation courses detailing the set-up and operation of the 200-bed Emergency Hospital were provided in November 2004 and in October and November 2005. Two NESS Orientation and Unit Box Identification Courses were conducted in January 2005 and February 2006. The basic training courses for both Emergency Health Services and Emergency Social Services have been developed in consultation with the P/Ts and includes information about NESS, discussion of the contents of NESS, and information on how NESS is accessed in their P/Ts. The course is designed to be delivered in an on-line learning format. It is expected the on-line learning program will be ready for launch in 2006.
- The National Office of Health Emergency Response Teams (NOHERT) has been working with NESS to coordinate the storage of equipment and supplies for our Health Emergency Response Teams (HERTs). The designated HERT equipment and supplies stored by NESS will be available to HERTs when field deployment is requested by P/Ts nationally.”³⁴

How Do First Responders Find Sites?

Following up on September 19, 2007, Library of Parliament researchers³⁵ asked the Public Health Agency of Canada: What are the formal protocols or procedures for local officials to get access to the nearest NESS site? What are the protocols for provincial officials? Health Canada replied on October 30, 2007:

“If the emergency should require an immediate response, local and provincial authorities have prior approval to access the NESS supplies pre-positioned within their jurisdictions and contact the PHAC Office of Emergency Response Services (OERS), Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response (CEPR) as soon as time permits. The local officials in collaboration with the emergency managers and first responders as per their local disaster plan will arrange for the issuing of the NESS supplies to the required response centres.”

³⁴ Health Canada, “Response to Committee Recommendations,” August 2006, pg. 4.

³⁵ The September 19, 2007 Library of Parliament correspondence with the Public Health Agency of Canada was conducted during a period of prorogation (which lasted from September 14, 2007 – October 16, 2007). During prorogation, the House of Commons and the Senate of Canada, as well as their committees, are dissolved. The Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence was not reconstituted until November 13, 2007. Correspondence pertaining to this report that is dated to this time was conducted by the Library of Parliament at the request of Senator Colin Kenny, who is the current Chair of the Committee.

We also asked Health Canada: How do the contents and location information diffuse down to the first responder levels during an emergency? How fast does this happen? The reply:

“The protocols at the local level are in place when an emergency event has escalated to the point where it is likely to overwhelm local response capacity. At this point, it is understood that local officials would contact the provincial emergency health/social service directors for approval to access the National Emergency Stockpile System (NESS).

The provincial and territorial emergency health/social service Directors, after receiving a request to access NESS support from a community, would in turn, contact the director or alternate at the OERS, the CEPR to receive approval to access NESS support.”

What Input Will First Responders Have?

We asked further: When will this Review of NESS be completed? How are the future contents of the NESS determined? Will first responders have input into this process? The reply:

“A working group completed a complex strategic review of the National Emergency Stockpile System (NESS) in December 2006. The working group consisted of federal and provincial representation. The process involved an evaluation by health professionals (first responders) of stockpile systems, an examination of NESS content and functionality, and a needs/gaps analysis designed to enhance NESS ability to assist local, provincial and territorial authorities when they find themselves overwhelmed by a given event. The report also contains a risk and threat analysis which was developed by the working group in collaboration with the Integrated Threat Assessment Center (ITAC), PSEPC and Provinces/Territories. This document is being used as a framework to design and plan a modern day stockpile based on 64 hazards/disasters with threat and casualty scenarios for natural and human caused disasters and will be used as a guide for the NESS procurement strategy. The final report contains recommendations to be used as the framework to improve NESS emergency preparedness and response capacity.”

CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT

Progress to date: None

From what the Committee has gathered from municipal survey responses and testimony from Health Canada, it is clear that no progress has been made in any of the Committee's recommendations. Particularly, there has been little progress by the federal government in updating the contents of caches, or in keeping first responders better informed about cache contents and locations. As well, first responders still have virtually no input into what goes into these vital caches.

Outdated Contents

Health Canada's responses to the Committee's questions suggest that there has been a lot of consultation and analysis and cooperation and coordination among federal, provincial and territorial public servants determined to overhaul the national system of emergency supplies. But there are information gaps in the government's responses. When the Committee has endeavored to fill those gaps by asking questions to witnesses at hearings, and by sending questionnaires to municipalities, we have discovered what we deem to be three major flaws in the system:

- 1. At least some of the content of the caches still appear to be outdated, or not to be what municipal emergency managers think is needed to respond to emergencies, or both;**
- 2. Many municipal emergency managers do not know what is in the caches, or where they are located;**
- 3. Despite claims that municipalities are consulted as to what should be in the caches, only one of 92 respondents to our survey of municipalities said that the municipality had been consulted.**

Despite the Committee’s warning back in 2004 that at least some of the content of the caches appeared to be outdated or otherwise inappropriate, the testimony of Dr. David Butler-Jones, Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer, on February 4, 2008 revealed that the process of updating them is only starting to be put in motion four years later:

Senator Banks: What is in [the caches] now?

Dr. David Butler-Jones, Chief Public Health Officer, Public Health Agency of Canada: We are starting to update them. We got rid of some of the non-essential stuff. That is going to be an ongoing process. It also required a re-evaluation of what is needed today, as opposed to 10, 15 or 20 years ago.³⁶

In response to the Committee’s municipal questionnaire some emergency officers who had seen the caches said there were contents more appropriate to the Korean War era than to the needs of first responders today. As Trent Elyea, Community Emergency Management Coordinator for the City of Orillia wrote in his response to the Committee’s 2007 emergency preparedness survey:

“If the caches referred to are the ones with the field hospitals they are of little use during an emergency. The complexity and age of the equipment will create some logistical issues and the supplies in the cache are from the Korean and Vietnam wars. There may be some things within the cache that may of use but they are so outdated they will likely not be adequate.”

Linley Biblow, Disaster Services Coordinator for the City of Calgary, wrote in the survey:

“PHAC representatives who give presentations at the Government of Canada CBRN First Responder Training Program (Intermediate Level course given at the Canadian Emergency Management College in Ottawa) continue to receive very robust challenges from first responder students. Although they claim that they offer 150 mobile hospitals and that supplies physically exist, reports are that the actual vintage of these supplies is decades old. As one example, some suction apparatus dates back to Korean War vintage.”

³⁶ David Butler-Jones, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 4, 2008, Issue 4, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

Hidden Caches

It seems obvious to the Committee that first responders should know exactly what emergency supplies are available to them, and where they are located. But Dr. Butler-Jones does not agree. This exchange took place when Dr. Butler-Jones testified in front of the Committee on February 4, 2008:

Senator Banks: ...I believe there was a review conducted by your agency in December 2006 of those national emergency stockpiles in various parts of the country. What would we find if we looked at them now? There are two parts to the question: Would the local responders to whom they would be the most use know either where they are or how to get at them; and second, are they in good shape and now contain useful supplies?

Dr. David Butler-Jones, Chief Public Health Officer, Public Health Agency of Canada: In terms of the first part of the question, local responders would not necessarily know where they are.

Senator Banks: Should they not know that?

Dr. Butler-Jones: I would argue that they should not. You may disagree. It is not local responders who decide when to implement or use it. It is up to the provincial emergency people. We provide it based on a request from the provincial emergency people. The escalation is that if you cannot do it locally, you manage it provincially. If you cannot manage provincially, then you engage us federally. They are across the country. Some may know, but the point is that they need to know to talk with the emergency coordinator, who talks with the province, and things get there quickly.³⁷

The suggestion that municipal emergency officers need not know where the caches are located – that they should only know which provincial officials to contact in times of emergency to find out – is a bit of a mind boggler.

Yes, Canada has a constitution that makes the municipalities creatures of the provinces. But emergencies, by their very nature, often cause chaos and catastrophes. Communications can break down. Key figures in bureaucratic protocol can be knocked completely out of the loop.

³⁷ David Butler-Jones, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 4, 2008, Issue 4, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

How can anyone suggest that municipal emergency officers should not be kept fully informed as to what is in emergency caches, and exactly where they are located? Municipal responders are first on the scene and operate without assistance from the province or federal government until they request such assistance. If they are on their own, they should know exactly what resources are available to assist them and how they can access them quickly.

The September 19, 2007 reply from the Public Health Agency of Canada cited above said this:

If the emergency should require an immediate response, local and provincial authorities have prior approval to access the NESS supplies pre-positioned within their jurisdictions and contact the PHAC Office of Emergency Response Services (OERS), Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response (CEPR) as soon as time permits.

So local authorities have prior approval to access the NESS supplies. Good. That makes sense. But many municipal authorities don't know where the NESS caches are, or what is in them. Having prior approval to access something doesn't do much good if you don't know where it is or what it is.

Why wouldn't it be considered imperative to take every chief emergency officer from across the country to the closest cache to examine what he or she might be able to make use of during an emergency, and to make suggestions as to what else might be provided?

How can the federal government recognize that emergencies happen *locally*, but then hide vital tools like NESS from local first responders?

If this is a matter of these officers getting security clearances, how hard would it be for the RCMP to check out a couple of hundred municipal employees who are being counted on to save their communities during emergencies? It's unlikely that these people would prove to be security risks, but if that's what it takes to keep them fully informed, why not check them out?

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN CANADA

Carl Shaw, Emergency Measures Coordinator for Colchester County, Ontario wrote:

“I know nothing about the National Emergency Stockpile System . . . If there is a cache in my area I do not have any knowledge about it, as to where it is or what is contained in it.”

Lack of Consultation on Contents

Various municipal emergency managers who have seen the caches have told the Committee that some contents aren't likely to correspond to community needs during emergencies. The Chair of the Committee queried Dr. Butler-Jones about this at the Feb. 4, 2008 hearing:

The Chair: What participation do local municipalities have in determining what might be in the stockpile near them?

Dr. David Butler-Jones, Chief Public Health Officer, Public Health Agency of Canada: We consult with the provincial coordinators, who I am presuming are consulting, we encourage them to consult and engage with the local municipalities in terms of what is most useful. It will depend.³⁸

Dr. Butler-Jones' presumption doesn't jibe with the result of the Committee's survey of municipalities. Out of 92 respondents, only the emergency management officials from Quebec City replied that there had been consultation on contents.

Randy Hull, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for the City of Winnipeg, testified on March 3, 2008:

Senator Day: You talked earlier about supplies in the event of an emergency. During the survey that we asked you to reply to, we asked if you were aware of the federal emergency stockpile system. In our travels, we discovered that in certain areas people did not know about this stockpile and the material wasn't up to date. Could you tell us about the stockpile of the federal government under the National Emergency Stockpile System? What does it look like? Have you seen it? Would it be helpful to see it? Does it complement what the City of Winnipeg has?

³⁸ David Butler-Jones, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 4, 2008, Issue 4, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

Mr. Hull: I know the location of the federal stockpile system in Winnipeg. I have not seen it but I know the location and the building because I have driven past it many times. I know that the Province of Manitoba has, on occasion over the last couple of years, pulled out the hospital-in-a-box concept and worked hard to assemble it. I have heard that it is antiquated and difficult to work with. I am more familiar with the stockpile that we have in our facilities for the Red Cross. For me, that is more attainable and reachable.³⁹

First responders often had very interesting insights into the caches – not only what their contents should be, but how the government should go about stockpiling. Barry Manuel, Emergency Measures Organization Coordinator for the City of Halifax wrote:

“There are a tremendous amount of resources in our country that can be brought to bear in an emergency. One needs to be careful not to stockpile resources that are readily available. Once resources are stockpiled, they require maintenance to ensure that the materials remain in an operational readiness state. There is little value in having a resource on paper that is years out of date or unusable. With current emergency legislation, governments have the ability to commandeer resources in times of crises and to deploy them for the greater good. One needs to balance the urge to stockpile and the end result of hoarding. A better system would be to identify critical resources and then have a tracking system in place that would show where they were throughout the province (and ultimately the country) at all times. This tracking system would be accessible to all levels of government and NGOs to search and also to maintain their segments. This would be a more efficient use of resources than stockpiling material away and allowing it to age.”

³⁹ Randy Hull, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, March 3, 2008, Issue 6, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

The Committee reiterates its 2004 recommendation that Health Canada overhaul the way it administers and manages the emergency caches so that they better serve our first responders.

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO DO THE ABOVE:

The Committee recommends that:

- 1. For perishable supplies, Health Canada develop a tracking system, accessible to all orders of government, which would identify available providers throughout the provinces/territories.**
- 2. Regular live exercises, and a budget to support the live exercises, are established in order to test the new emergency supply tracking system.**
- 3. First Responders have a greater say in the stockpiling of non-perishable emergency supplies, including where the inventories are held, whether there is duplication and how they are accessed.**

Problem 4:

Lack of Funding for Equipment & Training

The Problem as We Saw It in 2004: It is not hard to imagine the incredible agony and devastation that would result from a chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or explosive disaster. Events as disparate as the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986, the Bhopal industrial disaster in India in 1984, the Tokyo subway Sarin gas attack of 1995, and the World Trade Center terrorist attack of 2001 provide horrific reminders to the kinds of challenges that people in any country in the world could be faced with.

In the first federal budget following September 11, 2001 the government of the day provided six years of funding to municipalities to build the capability to handle chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) incidents. But large scale equipment purchases are only the beginning – the true cost of a capability must include the maintenance and training needed to sustain it – something that the federal government did not provide. As a result, municipalities are the ones stuck with the bill for maintaining expensive equipment in the long run.

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION (2004)

- **The federal government should provide four additional years of funding (\$5 million per year) for the purchase of CBRN⁴⁰ protection equipment.⁴¹**

⁴⁰ The acronym for Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear weapons (CBRN) is now generally expanded to include explosives: Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive weapons (CBRNE).

⁴¹ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 36. See recommendation #6.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS (2006-2008)

CBRN Equipment and Funding

In response to the above 2004 recommendation, Public Safety Canada wrote to the Committee on August 30, 2006:

“The 2001 Federal budget allocated \$10 million over two years for the purchase of CBRN equipment for first responders across the country. Funds were fully dispersed to the provinces and territories, who used the funds to build capacity in the largest urban centres and to build relatively uniform capabilities in strategic centres to provide a response capacity throughout their jurisdictions. The Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) was used to administer these funds.

Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC) recognizes that additional and ongoing funding is needed.

PSEPC has proposed to provinces and territories that a new Federal-Provincial-Territorial CBRN Working Group be formed to coordinate efforts to address CBRN incidents, including further assessing the need and priorities for new funding for CBRN equipment for first responders.”⁴²

That certainly was a start – setting up a working group to assess the need for new funding for CBRNE equipment. Library of Parliament researchers⁴³ followed up on this development on September 19, 2007 by asking Public Safety Canada: What is the status of this CBRN Working Group? How often do meetings convene, and what accomplishments can it list to date?

Five months later, on February 26, 2008, the Department replied:

“In April 2007, it was agreed by federal, provincial and territorial emergency management officials that a CBRN Sub-Working Group would be formed under the already established Response Working Group of the Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management. The working group is co-chaired by Public Safety Canada and a provincial/territorial official.

⁴² Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg. 10.

⁴³ See footnote #5.

To date, the sub-group's activities have included soliciting membership and participation, and drafting Terms of Reference and a Work Plan outline for consideration.

It is envisioned that the sub-group will work collaboratively on such issues as information sharing, identifying capability gaps, developing a future national strategy, updating inter-jurisdictional mutual aid agreements and establishing collaborative links between government, academia, industry and the public and finally, enhancing CBRNE research and development efforts.”⁴⁴

That Quicksand Just Keeps Sucking

Two years after the Committee identified the funding gap, Public Safety Canada proposed setting up a working group to examine the recognized need for new equipment. Nearly *four* years after the Committee identified the funding gap, Public Safety Canada had set up a sub working group to identify possible “capability gaps” – even though the Committee had already identified a very big gap indeed: **no funds to update equipment!**

To date, Public Safety Canada says that the sub-group's activities have included: (a) soliciting membership and participation, and (b) drafting Terms of Reference and a Work Plan outline for consideration.

As for action, none yet. No guarantee of action in anyone's lifetime. First responders are waiting, Canadians are at risk, and groups of bureaucrats are still soliciting and drafting and considering.

Let's give Nero credit where credit is due. At least he played the fiddle.

⁴⁴ Public Safety Canada, “Follow UP Questions for Public Safety Canada regarding: ‘Recommendations and PSEPC/Portfolio Responses to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence (SCONSAD)’ (August 30, 2006),” February 26, 2008, pg 2.

CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT

CBRNE and USAR Needs

First, the Committee reiterates what it said about CBRN in 2004:

CBRN events are now known as CBRNE – chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive events. Capabilities are needed to combat threats from these five directions that may come at Canadians through industrial accidents, natural disasters or terrorism.

The government must ensure that first responders have sufficient funding to buy and maintain CBRNE equipment and training. As well, equipment funding must match training funding.

The training of first responders to properly use CBRNE equipment should continue to be a government priority. Funding for training cannot dry up or first responders' hard-acquired readiness to respond will rapidly diminish. Funding and training must be matched with maintaining - buy, train, maintain.

Second, the Committee will add a component it overlooked in 2004 – Urban Search and Rescue (USAR).

USAR is defined as “a group of specialized rescue skills supplemented by search, medical and structural assessment resources combined in a mobile, highly integrated team.”⁴⁵ USAR does things like rescue people from collapsed buildings. There are five nationally recognized Heavy USAR teams (known

⁴⁵ Public Safety Canada, “Canadian Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Classification Guide,” Available at <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/em/usar/usar-guide-eng.aspx>

as HUSAR) in Vancouver, Calgary, Brandon, Toronto and Halifax.⁴⁶

The reason there are only 5 HUSAR teams, is that they are expensive to maintain and are composed of first responders that are full-time members. These teams were developed to be deployed by the federal government anywhere in Canada. These are *national* teams, and as such, the federal government must play a lead role in sustaining a national HUSAR capability through ongoing financial support and leadership.

Level of Funding Inadequate

On February 1, 2007 Fire Chief Bruce Burrell, Calgary's Director of Disaster Services, pointed out how underfunded Canada's HUSAR capability is compared to what is available in the United States:

Mr. Burrell: . . . A U.S. Department of Homeland Security audit report found that American urban search and rescue teams were underfunded. Those teams, over a four-year period, received approximately \$7.4 million U.S. per team. The Canadian teams, over a five-year period, have received approximately \$2.4 million Canadian per team. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security said, at \$7.4 million U.S., the teams in the U.S. that are constructed to the same standard are underfunded.⁴⁷

The December 2001 federal budget committed \$20 million over six years (2001-02 to 2006-07) to develop a national HUSAR capacity.⁴⁸ However, according to Public Safety Canada's *Departmental Performance Reports* since 2001, only \$2.4 million was allocated to each of the five national HUSAR Teams (in

⁴⁶ In response to a "Question Taken on Notice" stemming from the appearance of Scott Broughton, Public Safety Canada on January 28, 2008 before the Committee, Public Safety Canada addressed the issue of why there was no federally mandated HUSAR team in Quebec: "In 2004 the City of Montreal submitted a JEPP application for approximately \$2 million to increase HUSAR capabilities. This request was subsequently withdrawn in January, 2005."

⁴⁷ Bruce Burrell, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 1, 2007, Issue 9, 39th Parliament, 1st Session.

⁴⁸ Public Safety Canada, "Government of Canada Provides over \$1 Million in funding for Urban Search and Rescue Equipment," September 2, 2004. Available at http://ww2.ps-sp.gc.ca/publications/news/2004/20040902_e.asp

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2003-2004).⁴⁹ While an additional \$3 million was announced by the Deputy Prime Minister in 2005, the Committee could not verify that these funds had been provided to HUSAR teams through an examination of departmental performance reports. Most recently, \$2 million was announced for the Toronto HUSAR team in 2007.⁵⁰ The Committee plans to follow up on this announcement.

Funding of Equipment Maintenance

The first responders operating USAR have faced essentially the same type of problems as CBRNE first responders. Like CBRNE funding, the federal government funded basic USAR equipment purchases for two years only, apparently forgetting that this would be an ongoing need. As a result, some municipalities that never got the equipment in the first place are now without access to funds to get it. Municipalities that want to upgrade or replace equipment face the same problem.

In Public Safety Canada's 2006-2007 *Departmental Performance Report* the department recognizes the shortfall in HUSAR funding, promising that revisions would be made to "the JEPP [Joint Emergency Preparedness Program] terms and conditions to allow for support of operating and maintenance expenditures for heavy urban search and rescue teams – by end of 2007-2008."⁵¹

When we asked Public Safety Canada if there had been changes to USAR funding criteria, we were told that "Treasury Board recently approved an amendment to JEPP's terms and conditions to make operational and maintenance costs for USAR

⁴⁹ In Public Safety Canada's Departmental Performance Reports from 2001-2006, only one specifically mentions specific funding delivery for USAR. "Canada's capacity for heavy urban search and rescue was advanced in 2003-04 through the ongoing collaboration of a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary Urban Search and Rescue Advisory Committee and the allocation of \$2.4 million in federal funding to five selected municipalities across Canada." Public Safety Canada, *2003-2004 Departmental Performance Report*, http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/dpr/03-04/PSEPC-SPPCC/PSEPC-SPPCCd3401_e.asp#7

⁵⁰ Canada News Centre, Minister Day launches Emergency Preparedness Week by announcing \$5 million for emergency preparedness in Canada,

<http://news.gc.ca/web/view/en/index.jsp?articleid=396579&keyword=husar>

⁵¹ Public Safety Canada, *2006-2007 Departmental Performance Report*, November 1, 2007. Available at <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/dpr-rmr/2006-2007/inst/psp/psp02-eng.asp>

initiatives eligible for cost sharing effective April 1, 2008.” This is a positive development, although the Committee will be monitoring this issue with first responders to see if the good news trickles down.

Third, municipalities are in desperate need of money to train USAR and CBRNE personnel.

All first responders should have at least a basic level of CBRNE training. The Committee heard testimony that CBRNE training can cost \$1 million a year in large municipalities.

On January 29, 2007, the Committee heard from Patricia Doge, Vancouver’s Director of Risk and Emergency Management:

Ms. Doge: We need funding for first responder training. I think all first responders should have a basic level of CBRN training and even people like dispatchers or call takers, because really it makes a huge difference if they ask the right questions.⁵²

On February 1, 2007 Calgary Fire Chief Bruce Burrell emphasized to the Committee the need for better training in CBRNE in both large and small municipalities:

Mr. Burrell: The City of Calgary requires more fully trained responders for CBRNE. Once again, we have a training issue with the Canadian Emergency Management College, which provides limited spots in the provinces in an attempt to train everyone in the country to the same level, regardless of whether they have the equipment, resources or commitment to field a response-ready team.

The provinces, in turn, dictate which municipalities receive the spots for training, which makes it difficult for the municipalities to build the capacity they need to have an effective team.

⁵² Patricia Doge, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, January 29, 2007, Issue 9, 39th Parliament, 1st Session.

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A level of training is missing in the federal program to allow smaller municipalities to be trained for levels of response that are within their capacity.

The CBRNE intermediate course at the Canadian Emergency Management College could be delivered potentially within the provinces or major cities, maximizing the number of students that could be trained.

To train municipal first responders to the standards proposed by the CEMC [Canadian Emergency Management College] would cost the City of Calgary approximately \$1 million.⁵³

If more money is needed for CBRNE training for smaller municipalities, the same is true for HUSAR training. In addition to the five large HUSAR units referred to earlier, smaller urban search and rescue units are being developed across the country. On January 29, 2007, Tim Armstrong, Assistant Chief, Special Operations, Vancouver Fire & Rescue, testified:

Senator Day: I did not realize that the Heavy Urban Search and Rescue teams are limited to four or five cities. What is happening in the rest of the urban areas that do not have these teams?

Mr. Armstrong: Initially PSEPC accepted three teams: light- medium- and heavy- teams. The five teams have eaten up most of the funding, which has left the smaller municipalities out of luck. I believe smaller regional teams are necessary.⁵⁴

In response to the Committee's survey of municipalities, 13 percent of respondents said that their municipality was either developing or had a functional USAR capability. Among the cities which were developing/possessed USAR capability are: Saskatoon, Sask.; Victoria, B.C.; Halton Hills, On; Campbell River, B.C.; Alma, Que.; St. Georges, Que.; Strathcona County Alta.; Thunder Bay, On., and Victoriaville, Que.

It is clear to the Committee that neither large nor small Canadian communities are receiving the funds they require from the federal government's Joint Emergency Preparedness Program

⁵³ Bruce Burrell, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 1, 2007, Issue 9, 39th Parliament, 1st Session.

⁵⁴ Tim Armstrong, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, January 29, 2007, Issue 9, 39th Parliament, 1st Session.

for defence against Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear or Explosive (CBRNE) threats, or for Urban Search and Rescue (USAR).

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Committee recommends that the government should establish an *evergreening fund* dedicated to:

a. Maintaining current Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and CBRNE capabilities, including equipment purchase, maintenance, and training for all relevant emergency workers, based on a negotiated funding formula;

b. Allow smaller municipalities attempting to set up USAR facilities to receive funding;

2. The Committee recommends that the government design a HUSAR kit that would fit into a Hercules aircraft (or C-17) enabling the Canadian Forces to transport USAR teams to emergency sites across Canada, or internationally, in a timely manner.

Problem 5: ***Poor Collaboration Among Governments***

The Problem as We Saw It in 2004: The level of inter-jurisdictional information sharing, collaboration and co-operation among different orders of government in Canada with respect to emergencies has been inadequate. Provinces, territories, and communities have not been sufficiently included in strategic emergency planning and management.

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION (2004)

The Committee recommended that:

- **Public Safety Canada negotiate memoranda of understanding between the federal government and the provinces and territories that details inter-jurisdictional responsibilities for both emergency preparedness and response.⁵⁵**
- **The Minister of Public Safety Canada ensure that new effective data-sharing protocols and mutual assistance agreements between federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments be implemented.⁵⁶**

⁵⁵ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 40. See recommendation #9.

⁵⁶ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 77. See recommendations #18 B.

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDATIONS (2006 – 2008)**

**Data Sharing and
Mutual Assistance Agreements**

Regarding the Committee's recommendation that new effective data-sharing protocols and mutual assistance agreements between federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments be implemented, Public Safety Canada wrote on August 30, 2006:

"The Integrated Threat Assessment Centre (ITAC) was established in 2004. ITAC's primary objective is to provide comprehensive threat assessments related to terrorism which are shared within the intelligence community, with other government departments, provinces/territories, municipalities, international partners, and to relevant first-line responders.

In addition, in 2005 a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on information sharing between PSEPC and the Department of Public Safety in New Brunswick was completed. It is hoped that this MOU can serve as a template for the development of similar MOUs with other provinces and territories.

Furthermore, PSEPC's Canadian Cyber Incident Response Centre has developed a Framework for Operational Cooperation with provincial, territorial and municipal governments. The Framework is an action plan for cooperation and outlines the operational commitments of each jurisdiction in the area of cyber security."⁵⁷

The establishment of the Integrated Threat Assessment Centre (ITAC) under CSIS was a welcome development. Also welcome is the fact that ITAC shares information on potential terrorist threats not just with provinces and territories, but also with municipalities and "relevant first line responders."

If this really is what ITAC does – bring local authorities into the picture – then it transcends the usual bureaucratic two-step whereby even during emergencies the federal government is reluctant to talk to municipalities directly.

⁵⁷ Public Safety Canada, "Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD," August 30, 2006, pg. 19.

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So if this is really happening – and several chiefs of police contacted by the Committee says that it is – *Hosanas! Kudos!* A breakthrough!

What ITAC seems to recognize that other branches of Public Safety Canada do not, is that to gather the information it needs, the Centre must listen to local police forces – direct contact and exchanges of information with those forces is essential.

The rest of Public Safety Canada works around the principle that federal departments must deal with provincial departments, and then provincial departments must deal with municipalities.

Public Safety Canada, which administers funding programs like JEPP [Joint Emergency Preparedness Program], should be making direct contact with Municipal Emergency Officers. They should keep them informed and listen to them, the same way ITAC connects with local police forces.

That is how Public Safety Canada could quickly ascertain what municipalities' priorities are, and get on with fixing the programs that would fund those priorities. That is how Public Safety Canada could have figured out years ago what should and should not be in its emergency caches.

There was no mention in the above response of anything about the implementation of data-sharing protocols.

The Federal/Provincial/Territorial 8-Point “Action Plan”

On September 19, 2007, regarding the 8-point FPT [Federal/Provincial/Territorial] action plan mentioned in their reply, Library of Parliament researchers⁵⁸ asked Public Safety: “What are the specifics of the 8-point FPT Action Plan? What is the status of this plan?” On February 26, 2008, Public Safety Canada replied:

1. Emergency Response Framework - Government collaboration intended to harmonize the federal system so that it complements each provincial and territorial system with respect to emergency response.

⁵⁸ See footnote 5.

2. Disaster Assistance - Ongoing discussion of reinforcing the current Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) and the development of financial assistance options outside of the existing DFAA.
3. Inventory of Disaster Assistance Programs - Creation of an inventory of the disaster assistance programs with the incorporation of provincial and territorial programs into the existing federal inventory.
4. Disaster Mitigation - Preparation of development options for a National Disaster Mitigation Strategy.
5. Training - Revision and update of the Training Strategy Action Plan for 2005-2010.
6. Exercise Calendar - Develop a calendar of joint FPT emergency response exercises.
7. Public Alerting - Expedite the development and implementation of the National Public Alerting Strategy.
8. Critical Infrastructure Protection Strategy - Development of the National Critical Infrastructure Protection work plan.

“The 8-point action plan was addressed at the January 10, 2007, Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Meeting of Ministers responsible for Emergency Management. An Emergency Management Framework for Canada was approved that supports the design, implementation and on-going improvements of emergency management in Canada. The Strategy for Emergency Training in Canada was also approved which helps advance the shared emergency management training aims of all jurisdictions.”⁵⁹

This action plan was agreed upon in January 2005, and many elements of that strategy were supposed to have been completed by summer 2005. With the exception of the approval of a “Strategy for Emergency Training in Canada” and completing the “Emergency Management Framework”, the above appears to be only a “to-do” list.

What we would prefer to see – anytime soon – is a “done” list.

⁵⁹ Public Safety Canada, “Follow UP Questions for Public Safety Canada regarding: ‘Recommendations and PSEPC/Portfolio Responses to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence (SCONSAD)’ (SCONSAD)’ (August 30, 2006),” February 26, 2008, pg 5.

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Memoranda of Understanding

With regard to the Committee's recommendation regarding memoranda of understanding between the provinces and territories, Public Safety Canada responded on August 30, 2006:

“Memoranda of understanding on federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) emergency management already exist with most provinces and territories (except Quebec, Alberta and Nunavut). There is an ongoing need to ensure that emergency management practices are current and coordinated, and PSEPC is actively engaged in working with the provinces and territories to achieve further.

“Ministers responsible for emergency management met in January 2005 to discuss plans to strengthen Canada's emergency management system and agreed on an 8-point FPT⁶⁰ Action Plan for priority initiatives in emergency management. FPT Deputy Ministers responsible for emergency management met in September 2005 and in May 2006. The next Ministerial meeting is planned for September 2006, at which time Ministers will receive an update on the FPT Action Plan and consider new priorities.

“With full participation of the federal and provincial governments, FPT working groups were created to address the 8-point Action Plan. Significant work has been undertaken by the groups in areas that include the enhancement of the federal emergency response framework that will complement those of the P/Ts, financial assistance to the provinces, strategies for mitigation, critical infrastructure, public alerting, and communications, and a training action plan and an exercise calendar.

“An FPT Operations working group is actively defining the inter-jurisdictional response when dealing with emergency management and security issues.

“FPT Senior Officials and Deputy Ministers have been working closely together to develop an Emergency Management Framework for Canada for approval by FPT Ministers Responsible for Emergency Management. FPT officials consider this framework to be a cornerstone of the national emergency management system. This framework also addresses the resolution taken at the July 2004 Council of the Federation meeting, where Premiers agreed to direct their Ministers Responsible for Emergency Management to work with the federal government to develop a coordinated strategy for emergency response in Canada, respecting provincial and territorial laws and plans already in place.”⁶¹

A bureaucratic rule: *When in doubt, smother them in words.*

⁶⁰ FPT refers to Federal/Provincial/Territorial

⁶¹ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg. 11.

This response acknowledges that MOUs have not been signed with Quebec, Alberta or Nunavut. That represents a gap of approximately a third of the country. It is difficult to contemplate a functioning national emergency matrix with that huge a hole in it.

An Emergency Management Framework

On September 19, 2007, regarding the Emergency Management Framework referred to above, Library of Parliament researchers⁶² asked Public Safety Canada: “What are the basic principles of this Framework? How will this Framework be operationalized, and how is it related to the National Emergency Response System (NERS)?” On February 26, 2008, Public Safety Canada replied:

“The Emergency Management Framework for Canada and the National Emergency Response System (NERS) responds to the direction of the Federal, Provincial and Territorial officials who agreed in January 2008, to "work together to improve and enhance the emergency response framework in order to harmonize the federal system so that it complements each provincial and territorial system".

The Framework was approved by Federal, Provincial and Territorial officials in January 2007. It is a policy-level document that defines the four interdependent functions of emergency management -prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. It describes the underlying belief and goals of Canadian emergency management and helps establish a common approach and lexicon for the emergency management community.

The nine principles that underpin the Framework are: responsibility, comprehensive, partnerships, coherency of action, risk-based, all-hazards, resilience, clear communications, and continuous improvement. They provide a strategic framework to support the design, implementation and ongoing improvement of policies, procedures, programs, and activities of emergency management.”⁶³

There is no mention that Quebec, Alberta and Nunavut have joined the parade. We must assume they have not.

⁶² See footnote #5.

⁶³ Public Safety Canada, “Follow UP Questions for Public Safety Canada regarding: Recommendations and PSEPC/Portfolio Responses to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence (SCONSAD)’ (August 30, 2006),” February 26, 2008, pg 6.

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At this stage, the remaining provinces and territories have, the response says, “a strategic framework to support the design, implementation and ongoing improvement of policies, procedures, programs and activities of emergency management.”

So, seven years after 9-11, Canada has a framework that eight provinces and two territories can work within to improve the way governments cooperate during major emergencies. As for actual improvements in the way Canada coordinates its emergency responses – nothing concrete to report.

CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT (2008)

What is Missing, Other Than Just About Everything?

In all these responses, there is no mention of the Government Operations Centre (GOC) which, according to its website, is:

“The hub of a network of operations centres run by a variety of federal departments and agencies including the RCMP, Health Canada, Foreign Affairs, CSIS and National Defence. The GOC also maintains contact with the provinces and territories as well as international partners such as the United States and NATO. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, gathering information from other operations centres and a wide variety of sources, both open and classified, from around the world. The GOC deals with anything -- real or perceived, imminent or actual, natural disaster or terrorist activity -- that threatens the safety and security of Canadians or the integrity of Canada’s critical infrastructure.”⁶⁴

If the Government Operations Centre really is maintaining contact with the provinces and territories, can anybody say what is being accomplished when contact is made?

This gets back to substance. A framework is one thing. Improved policies, procedures, programs and activities are other things – in fact, they’re the *main* things. The only thing our Committee is asking for is evidence that Canadian governments are currently sharing substantive information that will help everyone prepare for emergencies, and that there are systems in

⁶⁴ Public Safety Canada, “Government Operations Centre”, February 1, 2008. Available at <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/em/goc/index-eng.aspx>

place to offer substantive practical assistance during – and in the wake of – emergencies.

To this end, the Committee has been monitoring the development of the National Emergency Response System (NERS), Public Safety Canada’s supposed inter-departmental, inter-governmental system for dealing with emergencies. However, NERS has been in development since 2003 and – five years later – no one knows when it will be complete. More on NERS and Son of NERS in Problem 11.

So far, the good news that the Integrated Threat Assessment Centre (ITAC), is connecting with first responders on terrorist threats. Beyond that, the gruel gets thin.

There’s a national framework with a large hole in it that seems to have a lot of good intentions, but to date there doesn’t appear to be anything to show for those intentions. Then there is an Operations Centre that went unmentioned in the responses. It may or may not be transferring useful information among governments. We don’t know.

The Committee has a new recommendation that responds to the fact that one of the barriers to sharing useful information with municipalities may be a set of Treasury Board regulations that forbid sharing federal information with anyone who does not have a federal security clearance.

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee recommends that:

- 1. The federal government identify municipal emergency officers across the country who require security clearances to receive federal information, ensure that they are checked out and given security clearances if they pass; and**
- 2. Public Safety Canada communicate directly with municipal emergency officers at any time that the department has information or other resources that could improve the emergency response capacity of these municipalities**
- 3. The federal government conduct a “value for money” audit of Public Safety Canada.**

Problem 6(a):

Lessons Learned Not Remembered

Knowing how to act quickly and appropriately in chaotic circumstances is at the heart of disaster response. Being aware of pre-existing “lessons learned” from other disasters is key to avoiding delays and mistakes in emergency response and management. Lessons learned should turn into agreed-upon best practices, which may then turn into standards.

The Problems as We Saw Them in 2004: Government witnesses acknowledged that the government’s “lessons learned” archive was close to being non-existent. One glaring weakness – it didn’t contain lessons from major disasters. In addition, the information in the archive was not being disseminated to first responders – the people who need it most. When you have problems with both content and delivery, you have problems.

COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATION (2004)

- **Public Safety Canada must structure its “lessons learned” archive so that it is:**
 - **Up to date and historically deep; and**
 - **Accessible and helpful to First Responders.⁶⁵**

- **Public Safety Canada should act as a clearinghouse to assist other orders of government by distributing provincial / territorial and municipal “lessons learned” to other jurisdictions as required; and**

- **Public Safety Canada should also prepare and publish a preliminary public report within sixty (60) days of the emergency followed by a formal public report within one year of any national**

⁶⁵ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada’s Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 36. See recommendation #7.

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emergency outlining “lessons learned” from the emergency and various responses to it.⁶⁶

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS (2006 – 2008)
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Not Capturing Lessons-learned

In response to the Committee’s recommendations to create a “lessons learned” archive, the Department of Public Safety wrote on August 30, 2006:

“The National Exercise Division (NED) of [Public Safety Canada] PSEPC has developed and is piloting a secure web site that allows federal, provincial and territorial partners to exchange exercise information, lessons learned and best practices.

“Through the Interdepartmental Exercise Coordination Committee, NED is providing a forum for federal government departments and agencies to regularly update counterparts on exercise findings. The Committee will be establishing a team to address key elements related to the further development of the lessons learned holdings and expanded access across jurisdictions. PSEPC is amending its national response structure to capture lessons learned from events and exercises to incorporate operational procedures. These efforts will help to identify improvements and sustain progress.”⁶⁷

Regarding the lessons-learned processes, Library of Parliament researchers⁶⁸ asked on September 19, 2007: “When will this formalized ‘lessons learned’ process be operational? Will the progress assessments be available publicly?” On February 26, 2008, Public Safety Canada responded:

“The National Exercise Division is currently consulting with other governments, domestic and international, on current and emerging models of systems for lessons learned and related processes. The process will be operational in the

⁶⁶ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada’s Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 78. See recommendation #18 G (i).

⁶⁷ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg. 10.

⁶⁸ See footnote #5.

Spring of 2009. Due to the sensitive nature of the content of progress assessments, it is not anticipated that they will be available publicly.”

What is so sensitive about lessons learned/best practices? If there are components that deal with sensitive technologies or techniques that terrorists should not be aware of, surely these components can be categorized and only made available to people with the highest security clearance. Otherwise, why not make the information available to first responders – the people most in need of it?

One suspects that this “sensitive” issue is really just the tired issue of federal and provincial bureaucrats bowing scrupulously to one another’s jurisdictions. One would think that trying to pre-empt disasters would call for a more vigorous approach.

Getting Important Lessons Learned to First Responders

Regarding the Senate Committee’s recommendation that Public Safety Canada act as a clearinghouse for all of government, Public Safety Canada wrote on August 30, 2006:

“The National Exercise Division (NED) of PSEPC has developed and is piloting a secure web site that allows federal, provincial and territorial partners to exchange exercise information, lessons learned and best practices.

“In addition, selected publicly available lessons learned reports as well as other emergency management articles and other reports are now being added to the Resources section of the expanded web site of the Canadian Emergency Management College launched in May 2006.”⁶⁹

Regarding the lessons learned and best practices website, Library of Parliament researchers⁷⁰ asked on September 19, 2007: “When will this website be fully operational?” On February 26, 2008, Public Safety Canada responded:

“The Web site is being further developed in tandem with the lessons learned process, with a target date of Spring 2009.

⁶⁹ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg. 18.

⁷⁰ See footnote #5.

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The site is already functioning and available to provinces and territories P/Ts but being upgraded. As part of this process, we intend to use the outputs of the upcoming Best Practices and Lessons Learned Forum with P/Ts (an initiative of the Preparedness Working Group of SOREM [Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management]) through which we will consult further with provinces, territories, academics and American counterparts on the design and collaborative implementation of a more formalized lessons learned process which will contribute to broad-based knowledge management and advance continuous improvement.”

What can one say? Canadians experienced the devastating Saguenay (Quebec) floods in July 1996, the Red River (Alberta) floods in 1997, the Ice Storm of 1998 – to name a few. The alarm bells have been ringing for a while, and the target date for a shared lessons-learned catalogue is **Spring 2009**. One small mercy is that there is at least a target date. If preparation for emergencies were really taken seriously in this country, that target date would be called a *deadline* – and there would be repercussions if it were allowed to slip by.

Annual Public Safety Reports

Finally, regarding our recommendation that Public Safety Canada publish annual reports, Public Safety responded on August 30, 2006:

“PSEPC is amending its national response structure to improve how it captures lessons learned from operations and to incorporate these lessons into operational procedures. The formalized version of this enhanced lessons learned process will include regular progress assessments.”⁷¹

We asked Public Safety to table regular reports on lessons learned – and so far, as their response indicates, nothing seems to have happened. It is not hard to imagine why – their ‘secure’ best practices/lessons learned website has been in development for years, and Public Safety seems to be consulting without having any final product.

⁷¹ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg. 22.

CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT

Get the Heavy Lifters
The Information They Need

Three years have passed since the Committee recommended a national catalogue of best practices for emergencies. According to the responses we got, another year will have sauntered by before the electronic catalogue actually exists.

When the catalogue does finally make its appearance, there are no signs that it will be made available directly to first responders in the municipalities. The list will first have to go from the federal government to the provinces who own the municipalities. The catalogue *may* then be passed on to people in municipalities responsible for responding to emergencies.

If it is eventually passed on, how long will it take for all the provinces and territories to get this kind of vital information to first responders? The Committee is concerned it will take too long.

Bureaucrats over the years have created so many non-dictionary words to communicate with one another that even some of them refer to their polite, muffled and acronym-laden language as “Bureaucratese.”

The following exchange took place between members of the Committee and Scott Broughton, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Emergency Management and National Security, Public Safety Canada, on January 28, 2008:

The Chair: Do you not consciously keep a catalogue, a 20-minute brief, a two-hour brief or a two-day brief on how to educate people to deal with ice storms, blackouts, flood conditions, et cetera, so that people are not reinventing the wheel when these occur?

Mr. Broughton: Like all organizations in emergency preparedness across the country, through exercises and actual events, numerous reports are

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done. From that point of view, there is a learning process that happens in organizations. Whether we would have an expert sitting in the right place specifically experienced about ice storms at any given point in time, the answer is probably not. There are probably enough people who have expertise. I think our Government Operations Centre would have general and generic advice that would be of use. However, in terms of having people ready on each one of those, I am not sure we would have somebody sitting there at the ready.

The Chair: Why not?

Mr. Broughton: Immediate response is a provincial and territorial responsibility.

The Chair: Are you satisfied that that information rests with the provinces and that you can say, “You should go and ask the people in Quebec”?

Mr. Broughton: Not necessarily. If we did not have it, I think we would be able to find it quickly.

Whether there is an expert sitting in our Government Operations Centre or some other place that knows exactly what to do around an ice storm, I think they would know what to do. However, in terms of having the 20-minute brief, I would have to go back and check with them to see if they have that in detail. Clearly, they have learned through those processes and could be of assistance. However, I have not seen something that precise myself. I would have to go back and ask.⁷²

There appear to be no words for “urgent” or “emergency” or “crisis” in Bureaucratize. But like the Inuit – who have a multiplicity of words to describe snow – the federal bureaucracy can find hundreds of ways to say “slow”.

⁷² Scott Broughton, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, January 28, 2008, Issue 4, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

Problem 6(b):
Lack of Leadership on Best Practices

The Problem as We Saw It in 2004: The federal government was largely out of touch with first responders and is not playing a lead role in developing a catalogue of “best practices” as a guide to the first responders’ community, which would naturally be developed after examining “lessons learned” as a guide (which the Committee discussed in 6a).

COMMITTEE’S RECOMMENDATION (2004)

- **The Committee recommended that the Minister and the Department of Public Safety Canada:**
 - **Ensure that Canadian communities are fully informed about the availability of training programs and other resources to help them prepare to respond to emergencies;**
 - **Facilitate and finance a peer review system among emergency managers and first responders to ensure that “best practices” are being implemented and to foster greater interoperability⁷³;**
 - **Ensure that all agreements to provide funds to provincial and territorial governments disclose what percentage of those funds will be given to first responders in the municipalities;**
 - **Prepare and publish reports annually to Parliament on its activities. This report should emphasize the measures that Public Safety Canada has taken to upgrade Canada’s capacity to respond to national emergencies and the**

⁷³ Interoperability refers to the ability of diverse systems and organizations to work together (inter-operate).

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perceived shortfalls between assets and capabilities of first responders.⁷⁴

- **Public Safety Canada, in cooperation with municipal emergency response units, provincial and federal governments, and relevant federal departments, develop a set of “best practices” for potential natural and man-made disasters.**⁷⁵

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS (2006 – 2008)

Regarding the recommendation that Public Safety Canada ensure that Canadian communities are fully informed about the availability of training programs and other resources to help them prepare to respond to emergencies, the Department wrote on August 30, 2006:

“Emergency management training in Canada is a shared responsibility involving all jurisdictions and, increasingly, private training institutions, colleges and universities. As the federal government’s focal point for emergency management learning, PSEPC’s Canadian Emergency Management College (CEMC) works closely with provinces and territories to ensure maximum awareness of training opportunities and related resources.

“Action items being addressed by CEMC and its Provincial-Territorial partners include the collaborative aggregation and review of current training materials relevant to Business Continuity Planning, Recovery Management, Public Information and Exercise Design.

“PSEPC and its partners are delivering a four-level chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) training program for first-responders that was developed in partnership with federal departments/agencies and first-responder experts. On-line CBRN Awareness and Basic courses were launched in May 2006 and the delivery of Intermediate and Advanced CBRN courses has been increased.

⁷⁴ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada’s Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg 77, 78. See recommendations #18 A, D, E, F, and Recommendation G(ii). Parts B, C, and G(i) of recommendation #18 are addressed elsewhere in this chapter.

⁷⁵ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada’s Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg 77. See recommendation #18 C.

“The first phase of an expanded CEMC website was launched in spring 2006 bringing a greater range of information about training and other learning resources to the knowledge of all stakeholders. Further development of this expanded site will incorporate a searchable emergency management training database broadly capturing emergency management related training offered in Canada.

In collaboration with other partners, PSEPC is working to build the capacity of the Canadian emergency management community through advancement of the emergency management body of knowledge, and the development of the broader emergency management educational community. For example, in November 2005, PSEPC organized a national gathering of officials, academics, and others to discuss emergency management education. A further emergency management education workshop will be held in Fall 2006.”⁷⁶

Get Every First Responder Involved

Regarding the recommendation that [Public Safety Canada facilitate and finance a peer review system among emergency managers and first responders to ensure that “best practices” are being implemented and to encourage greater interoperability](#), they responded on August 30, 2006:

“PSEPC regularly involves stakeholders to develop and disseminate new products and tools to assist first responders. A Domestic Group on Emergency Management is being established to provide national voluntary and first responder associations with a platform to discuss emergency response in Canada during all four phases of emergency management (prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery). Members such as the Canadian Red Cross, Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs, Canadian Volunteer Fire Services Association, Salvation Army, Mennonite Disaster Services, and St. John Ambulance would gather as a formal group to discuss policy and operational issues of mutual interest that arise in complex domestic emergencies. Joint activities may include public communications, training opportunities and drill and exercises. The next meeting of this group is scheduled for Fall 2006.”⁷⁷

This sounds to the Committee like progress. But every municipal emergency coordinator in the country should be invited to these sessions. And for those who can't come, these gatherings should produce tangible materials that are useful to first responders across the country (i.e. workbooks, CDs and

⁷⁶ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg. 20-21.

⁷⁷ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg. 21.

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website content). Not everybody can attend these kinds of gatherings, but those who can't need access to anything of value that the meeting produces.

Responding to the recommendation that Public Safety Canada ensure that all agreements to provide funds to provincial and territorial governments disclose what percentage of those funds will be given to first responders in the municipalities, the Department responded:

“Under current assistance programs such as the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) or funding provided from Public Safety and Anti-Terrorism (PSAT) Budget (2001), provinces and territories disclose how funding is directed within their jurisdictions. While JEPP delivers funding to the provinces and territories, more than 90 percent of projects funded under JEPP are led by the municipalities. Under JEPP, provinces and territories prioritize funding requirements based on an assessment of needs throughout their jurisdictions.”⁷⁸

Good. The requirement for provincial disclosure of where the money is going is exactly what the Committee recommended.

Skimpy Reports

Regarding the recommendation that Public Safety Canada prepare and publish reports to emphasize the measures that it has taken to upgrade Canada's capacity to respond to national emergencies and the perceived shortfalls between assets and capabilities of first responders, the department wrote:

“PSEPC reports annually to Parliament through its Report on Plans and Priorities and Departmental Performance Report.”⁷⁹

The Committee was looking for the Department to honestly take a look at the capacity of the nation to respond to emergencies, including provincial and local response capabilities. The report on Plans and Priorities does not serve this purpose. But perhaps the Committee was barking up the wrong tree. More about this later.

⁷⁸ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg 21.

⁷⁹ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg. 22.

Regarding setting up “best practices”, Public Safety Canada wrote on August 30, 2006:

“PSEPC is continuing to develop and promulgate best practices and reports on emergencies to its partners. The Department produces numerous products to allow practitioners to understand how and why emergencies happen and how to best mitigate, respond to and recover from their consequences. These products are available through PSEPC s website.”⁸⁰

Getting It Together

A check of the Public Safety Canada website shows that it does indeed offer this kind of information, even if it is not all in one place:

- *getprepared.ca* is a spin-off site from Public Safety Canada, and is a useful source of emergency management information for the public
- Public Safety Canada also offers two guidebooks for practitioners on business continuity planning and basic rescue skills
- The Public Safety Canada website includes a page on Best Practices for the Assurance of Critical Infrastructure
- The website also has a section entitled: *Emergency Management Articles and Reports*, which contains links to 15 reports of lessons learned from emergencies worldwide, including Hurricane Katrina 2005; the 2003 blackout; and the 1998 ice storm.

Good, but not great. There is material scattered all over the website. While some information is available in some places of the website, it is neither organized nor systematic. Moreover, it does not come close to offering a comprehensive package of “lessons learned” and “best practices” to first responders across the country. Public Safety Canada is on the right track, but not the fast track. Public Safety Canada is also running into jurisdictional problems. How hard can it be to set up this kind of catalogue and add to it after any major emergency is confronted?

⁸⁰ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg 20.

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Public Safety Canada's job is to help first responders navigate uncharted waters. Why provide a jumbled and incomplete map?

CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT

A Cost Effective Investment

The concept of one central source distributing “best practices” to emergency responders across the country is really quite vital. How can we talk about emergency preparedness without doing everything in our power to ensure that first responders are as prepared as they possibly can be? They need equipment and training. Both are expensive. But getting information on best practices to them would be relatively inexpensive.

The following exchange from a Committee hearing on January 28, 2008 demonstrates how frustrating it can be to see a federal agency so consumed with inter-governmental protocol and seemingly so distant from potential tragedy:

The Chair: What role does the department have in terms of developing best practices and serving as a corporate memory for provinces and municipalities in Canada?

Scott Broughton, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Emergency Management and National Security: Around emergency preparedness, we have a significant role within the federal government. In terms of business continuity planning, exercises and the way emergencies are handled, we would play a significant role. I am not aware of anything we do that lays out standards or methods of operations other than working with the provinces and territories. In this country, in terms of a national system, it is really made up of individual systems across the country. Each province and territory is pretty sophisticated on its own and has a different way of organizing its centre. We would not have a process of standards, per se, in terms of how you would do business continuity or how to run an operations centre.

The Chair: For example, not all the provinces went through the ice storm experience but all provinces could go through a similar experience. Would you be good people to go to if someone received a forecast suggesting an ice storm? Would you be able to provide advice and counsel to them?

Mr. Broughton: There is a two-part answer to that. Possibly, but, more important, if we did not have the advice ourselves, we would make sure we could organize to get the help and advice.

.....

Senator Mitchell: There are certain areas in this process where you can imagine that consistent federal standards, if not necessary, would certainly offer something. An example would be in risk assessment. When a municipality or province does risk assessment, it gets back to the best practices idea.

Would you agree that there is a role for federal standards and parameters in defining the parameters of risk- assessment processes and planning, and are you doing any work at the federal level and with the provinces to create some national standards in that regard or in other areas that might be applicable?

Mr. Broughton: I do not want to be cute with the words, but there would be a difference between federal standards and national standards. I would say ``no'' to federal standards. I do not think there is a need or an interest or an appetite for us to create federal standards and try to dictate them to people.

National standards, where we work with colleagues and could agree on them, would obviously be of some benefit. We try to work closely with our provincial-territorial colleagues in a variety of ways to make that happen. By virtue of the number of times we function together, many of the operations, the way we talk and do things, end up being similar.

In terms of specific standard setting subject by subject, we would be happy to sit down and have the discussion, but we have not viewed it as something the federal government should arbitrarily or on its own create. The value of those standards would vary. If you have the opportunity to talk to some people from the provinces and territories, they would start out with the principle of why national standards make sense. When you get down to the crunch, you get into the differences of how they function, and you cannot compare a small community in Northern Quebec to whatever. You start to get into that dynamic, and it starts to get harder to do the national standard. It really does depend on what you are talking about. In principle, we would all say it has merit.

The Chair: We are looking for clarification of the words in the Emergency Management Act, promoting a common approach to emergency management, including the adoption of standards and best practices.

Mr. Broughton: The key word is ``promoting.'' We would do that. We would talk to our provincial and territorial colleagues about interoperability, the connection across emergency operations centres, the way in which we react to

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events and, to the extent we could standardize those, we would be promoting that.⁸¹

Mr. Broughton does not want to be “cute with words.” Better that Public Safety Canada stop being cute with the degree of urgency it attaches potential emergencies.

It is one thing if the federal government feels it must go through the provinces and territories to get equipment and training to first responders. But to get information to them? To let them in on what people with experience have discovered about the best way to deal with various types of emergencies? If the federal government cannot find a way to distribute this kind of information to municipal emergency coordinators across the country, it should start funding an institution that will.

The following testimony from John Ash, Manager of Emergency Management Ottawa given on January 28, 2008 is a prime example of how frustrating it can be for a municipal emergency coordinator in this country to get information on how best to proceed:

Mr. Ash: What would happen if there were a dirty bomb-type of incident that involved the Hill? Is there an expectation that members of Parliament — the Senate and what have you — will receive preferential treatment with regard to decontamination?

Senator Nancy Ruth: Are you asking us?

Senator Tkachuk: I have no idea.

Mr. Ash: I have no idea myself, but I have asked some people within the federal government and there is an assumption that there would be. If there are hundreds of people that require decontamination, is there an expectation of service?

We say, let us sit down and talk about -- that expectation. Let us throw the cards on the table to say, “This is what it costs us to provide this level of service.” Perhaps there is a formula or some way we can equate added benefit to the city. We want to have that dialogue. We want to be frank and candid, throw the cards on the table and say this is where we are at, so we can close the gaps if necessary.

⁸¹ Scott Broughton, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, January 28, 2008, Issue 4, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

Senator Tkachuk: Are you pushing for that dialogue now?

Mr. Ash: Yes.

Senator Tkachuk: Are they being helpful or are they stalling you? What is happening? Maybe we can help you.

Mr. Ash: It was challenging for me, because I spent probably two years trying to find the right person to talk to.

Senator Nancy Ruth: We have the same problem.

Mr. Ash: I say that with some understanding of the complexity because there is each individual department. My issues are about the government and not individual departments. Whether it is a municipal pipe that comes into the various buildings, I need to know about the dependency on the water, because we are responsible for that. If we do not have that dialogue holistically, as the federal government to the City of Ottawa, it will be difficult for us to prioritize critical infrastructure and all those kinds of things.

Coming back to your question, we understand clearly that there is a benefit. However, we want to ensure that we are both talking about apples and apples and that there is a clear expectation of what service will be provided and the cost for that service.⁸²

This sort of frustration is reiterated in testimony the Committee received from Randy Hull, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for the City of Winnipeg on March 3, 2008:

Senator Day: We were talking earlier about New Orleans and you had spoken to someone who was very involved in the flooding in New Orleans caused by Hurricane Katrina. You had mentioned asking if they checked with North Dakota. Could you tell us that story? I think it illustrates the importance of overall coordination.

Mr. Hull: We had a conference of our Public Health Agency and health care providers. There was a doctor who came up from New Orleans. He was one of the doctors who had to evacuate the Tulane hospital and was also responsible for all the hospitals getting back together. I asked him in our conversation: "Have you ever had a conversation with the people from Grand Forks?" Similarly, they lost 80 per cent of their city. Although smaller in size, the structure of their recovery program was unique. The City of Winnipeg developed its recovery plan based on a plan out of Australia and the city of Grand Forks. I presented that at

⁸² John Ash, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, January 28, 2008, Issue 4, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

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the World Conference on Disaster Management back in 2002. We wanted to share that.

The doctor from New Orleans said, "Grand Forks, North Dakota? Why would I call them?" I am sure some people in Louisiana are not sure where that is. They are land-locked. I told him they had exactly the same situation, though on a smaller scale. However, the recovery plan was exhaustive and unique, and it worked so well. I told him they were up and recovered within five years. You are talking to me about New Orleans and it is two years plus and you are still in dire straits.

I gave him the contact names of three people from Grand Forks that I had. One of those three called me a month later and said, "I am going to New Orleans for three months."

It took a contact from New Orleans talking someone in Winnipeg to be told about Grand Forks. Why is Federal Emergency Management Agency not laying out saying, "Here is a perfect case scenario of another American city that you should follow."? Likewise, here in Canada, it would be nice to learn more about other regions. I have learned about the B.C. forest fires and the evacuations from 2003. However, I have learned it from my counterparts in B.C. Never once have I seen something federally that says, "Here is an exhaustive list of things learned from B.C. or learned in the flooding in Quebec."

I am not sure what the policy people and the planners are doing in Ottawa at the federal level that we are not sharing that information as well as we could be.

The Chair: Could you summarize on that subject? You have raised a couple of areas, one being a repository for best practices in Ottawa. What else, from your perspective municipally, would you like to see from Ottawa?

Mr. Hull: I would like to see best practices and information about growing trends, both nationally and internationally. I am amazed at some of the stuff I pull out of contacts that I have with Australia. They are often a key player at one of the disaster management conferences held in Toronto. Also, I would like to see consistent templates of what would be a good emergency management contingency. It would be nice for Ottawa, along the lines of the provinces, saying if you have a city greater than 50,000 you should have two people; or, if you are a city of 300,000 you should have three people. That would bode well for me, from a city that has one emergency planner.⁸³

⁸³ Randy Hull, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, March 3, 2008, Issue 6, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

Perhaps it is time for Committee members to quit banging our heads against the wall in the hope that the federal government will eventually take a lead in educating municipal first responders about how best to prepare for emergencies.

A Best Way for Best Practices?

The following testimony shows that – even within the confines of a *single* provincial government – collecting “lessons learned” and “best practices” can be an exercise in spinning one’s wheels and getting nowhere. The Committee listened attentively to solutions to this problem in the testimony from Mark Egener, Managing Director of Emergency Management, Alberta on January 30, 2007:

Mark Egener, Managing Director, Emergency Management Alberta:

Recently we have had a number of large-scale disasters in Alberta; in particular, a year and a half ago now, there was the Wabamun train derailment, which is on page 7. No people were killed in that incident, but 41 freight cars carrying bunker C fuel oil and a nasty lubrication oil spilled into Lake Wabamun, a catastrophic event for the community and a disaster for the environment.

Following that, Alberta formed the Environmental Protection Commission, chaired by Eric Newell, former head of Syncrude and now chancellor of the University of Alberta. The commission comprised six other members — all also leading national experts in disaster management — and benefited from a number of expert advisors. The commission’s report, which I believe you have, outlined ten recommendations to strengthen Alberta’s emergency management system and move it towards a world-class system to protect the safety and security of Albertans. We are currently implementing those ten recommendations.

...Second, the commission recommended the establishment of an institute to support the whole function [of emergency management] in Alberta. This is probably the most innovative of their recommendations. They found that there were several things that governments were not equipped or well-positioned to do, such as research, evaluations of incidents, and collecting lessons learned from around the world. Therefore, they recommended the establishment of an institute based on a major educational or research institution, such as the University of Alberta, to support the whole function.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Mark Egener, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, January 30, 2007, Issue 9, 39th Parliament, 1st Session.

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If one government like Alberta has the good sense to realize that it is “not equipped or well-positioned to” do certain things – namely research and evaluate incidents and collect lessons learned from around the world and therefore contract these things out to 3rd party institutions – why does the committee continue to pretend that the federal department – depending on input from ten provinces and three territories – can manage this task? The Committee believes that Canadians would be better served if the Government of Canada stepped boldly outside the confines of government to finally address this important task.

In fact, the closest thing to national standards Canadians have access to were all formulated by non-government entities. For instance, the emergency preparedness, management and recovery standards that many emergency managers across Canada use today were developed by the (American) National Fire Protection Association and the Canadian Standards Association.⁸⁵

Given the long-running constitutional difficulties in any endeavour involving the three orders of government, perhaps an independent institution, outside of any level of government, could circumvent constitutional boundaries and instead of spending time wrangling over jurisdiction, just sit down and actually consider what sort of best practices would benefit the first responders of the nation.

⁸⁵ Many Canadian emergency managers at the local level have used the (American) National Fire Protection Association NFPA 1600 standard. On February 29, 2008 the Canadian Standards Association released the CSA Z1600 standard for emergency planning which, they claim, is Canada-specific and an improvement upon the NFPA 1600. For more details about both sets of standards, see: Canadian Standards Association, “CSA OHS Matters - CSA Z1600: Setting a new standard for emergency management and business continuity in Canada,” February 29, 2008. Available at http://ohs.csa.ca/news/dsp_Z1600.asp

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Committee recommends that the government should call for tenders from Canadian universities and institutions involved in dealing with emergencies and transfer funding from Public Safety Canada to one such institution that will:

- Develop and maintain an online catalogue of “lessons learned” and “best practices” from past emergencies in Canada and around the world and share that catalogue with all Canadian first responders;**
- Provide to any Canadian municipality requesting it an audit of that municipality’s emergency measures response capacity;**
- Report to Parliament annually on any deficiencies the institution might find in Canada’s system of preparing for, and responding to, emergencies.**
- Formulate a protocol to consult the emergency managers of different orders of governments and first responders for the purposes of determining how to best assemble national standards for best practices.**

2. The Committee recommends that after each meeting of the Domestic Group on Emergency Management, the government should compile a list on topics discussed, information shared, and to convert this list into materials (ie. workbooks, CDs, web content) that can be disseminated and used by first responders across the country.

Problem 7:

Emergency Public Communications

The Problem as We Saw It in 2004: No province or territory has legal authority to insist that private-sector media disseminate emergency-related information immediately to citizens within their jurisdiction.

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION (2004)
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- **In order to ensure that authorities have the power and the capability to interrupt radio and television broadcasts during emergencies:**
 - **Public Safety Canada design standards for the establishment of emergency public warning systems for all provinces and territories;**
 - **the Governor in Council, by order, direct the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to introduce such regulations as necessary to ensure that all public and private broadcasters are required to cooperate in the establishment of provincial / territorial and national public warning systems; and**
 - **a national emergency website with links to provincial and territorial emergency websites be established so that emergency information and instructions can quickly be communicated via the Internet during a national emergency.**

- **Public Safety Canada encourage the installation of a system like “Reverse 911®”⁸⁶ in all municipalities, funding at least a third of**

⁸⁶ According to their company website, the Reverse 911® technology allows “users [to] quickly target a precise geographic area and saturate it with thousands of calls per hour. The system’s interactive technology provides immediate interaction with recipients and aids in rapid response to specific needs.” For more, please visit: <http://www.reverse911.com/index.php>

the cost, with remaining costs to be divided between the provinces / territories and municipalities.⁸⁷

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDATIONS (2006 – 2008)**

**Toward a Standardized
National Public Alerting System?**

In response to the Committee's recommendation that Public Safety Canada develop national standards for a public warning system, the Department wrote on August 30, 2006:

“Industry Canada and Canadian Heritage have the expertise and accountability for telecommunications and broadcasting undertakings, including their adaptation and use in emergencies. PSEPC is working closely with these departments as they work to address public alerting issues. Industry Canada has been leading a comprehensive review and assessment of public alerting technologies and opportunities with funding from the December 2001 Budget.

“Industry Canada, in close collaboration with PSEPC, is leading an initiative to develop a Canada-wide public alerting system, named CANALERT, to provide an effective capability to all levels of government to issue alerts and warnings of imminent emergencies to populations likely to be adversely impacted. CANALERT would allow authorized emergency management personnel to issue urgent emergency warnings to the public using technologies such as radio, television, landline telephones, wireless devices, the Internet and other communication technologies.

“Officials from Industry Canada and PSEPC briefed Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Deputy Ministers Responsible for Emergency Management (May 31, 2006) on the status of the CANALERT initiative. A demonstration of the CANALERT concept and capabilities was also provided. FPT Deputy Ministers agreed on the need to work collectively to develop a solid business case for a national public alerting strategy and to seek funding.”⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 63. See recommendations #12 and 13.

⁸⁸ PSEPC, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006. Pg. 12-13.

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On September 19, 2007, regarding CANALERT, Library of Parliament researchers⁸⁹ asked the following follow-up question to Public Safety Canada: “What is the status of development of the CANALERT system? How long has this system been in development, and when will it be completed?” On February 26, 2008 the Department responded:

“The need for a national public alerting system has been advanced as a coordinated federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) effort since 2002. In 2007, FPT officials agreed on the main components and requirements of a national public alerting system, and presented these recommendations to FPT Ministers responsible for emergency management on January 9, 2008. Ministers were supportive, and instructed officials to continue working with the broadcasting industry to establish a Canadian public alerting system, to be operational in 2010.

The proposed system would enable authorized FPT officials to create alert messages and make them available to telecommunications service providers, which would transmit the alerts to the public. The focus to date has been on using radio and television for alert distribution, with the intention of adding distribution over Internet and wireless devices in time. Industry participation in the national public alerting system would be voluntary, in keeping with the February 2007 decisions of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.”

The Committee is fed up with having to harp on this theme. But more than two years after our report drew attention to this problem – and fully five years after budget funding was provided for a review of public alerting systems – Industry Canada seems to have gotten its act together and set out some clear deadlines for a national public alerting system, whether it is called CANALERT or not. More on this in our “Challenge to Government” below.

Will Private Broadcasters Be Forced to Cooperate?

Regarding the Committee’s recommendation that the Governor in Council direct the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission to introduce such regulations to ensure that all public and private broadcasters are required to cooperate in the establishment of

⁸⁹ See footnote #5.

provincial/territorial and national public warning systems, CRTC responded on July 13, 2006:

“We have not been directed by the GIC to introduce such regulations since my last correspondence to you dated October 7, 2004.

However, in 2005 we received an application for authority to provide an All Channel Alert (ACA) service to Broadcasting Distribution Undertakings (BDUs) across Canada. In view of the nature, scope and national implications of the proposal, the Commission decided to call for competing applications and issued a Public Notice.”⁹⁰

Good. In 2006 the CRTC was already treating this issue with some degree of resolve. The CRTC’s intervention is welcome here. It had been difficult to see much progress within the federal bureaucracy since 2001.

‘Reverse 911®’: Notifying the Public Quickly

Regarding the recommendation that Public Safety Canada encourage the installation of a system like Reverse 911® system in all municipalities, the Department replied on August 30, 2006:

“‘Reverse 911®’ is one of several competing commercial notification services utilizing automated telephone dialling. Because of the time required in relation to the cost of multiple dedicated lines, this technology may not be as effective as others. A more effective (but intrusive and expensive) use of the telephone involves a special pre-coded receiver in each household or workplace that can be digitally activated, simultaneously. This technology is already being trialed by several major telephone companies.

One of the major weaknesses of all telephone-based alerting systems is the lack of regularly maintained databases of telephone numbers. Such databases exist (e.g. 911 databases) but are strictly protected and precluded from dial-out access by telephone companies in accordance with privacy considerations (i.e. unlisted numbers). Industry Canada has been working with prototype communities, the CRTC and the Privacy Commissioner, to develop conditions and criteria for access to the 911 database.”⁹¹

⁹⁰ Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, “Response to Committee Recommendations,” July 13, 2006.

⁹¹ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg 13.

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Regarding the 911 database that would enable the use of the Reverse 911® system, Library of Parliament researchers⁹² asked Public Safety Canada on September 19, 2007: “What progress has been made in the development of these ‘conditions and criteria’, and when will a system of automatic notification be expected to become operational? How will this function with CANALERT?” On February 26, 2008 the Department responded:

“Community notification systems (CNS) are commercially available today and are currently used by some municipalities to notify residents of emergency situations. In the February 28, 2007, Telecom Decision CRTC 2007-13, the CRTC determined that it is in the public interest to allow public authorities to use the telephone numbers and associated addresses contained in 911 databases, in order to enhance the effectiveness of CNS. The CRTC has since established an interconnection steering committee, to assist parties in developing common security, privacy and accountability standards for enhanced CNS.

As part of the groundwork for developing a national public alerting system, public and private stakeholders are developing a standard alert format (Common Alerting Protocol Canadian Profile) that may be used across multiple technologies, including CNS.”⁹³

The CRTC has relaxed restrictions on the use of 911 databases, giving emergency managers the ability to access an up-to-date and accurate list of phone numbers in the event they need to reach the public at a critical time. This is a major breakthrough in the implementation of an emergency alerting system.

CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT

CRTC to the Rescue

In testimony before the Committee, Serge Beaudoin, Director General, Preparedness and Recovery of Public Safety Canada testified that the federal, provincial and territorial bureaucracies were “on track” to have a national public alerting system in place by 2010. Admittedly, the Committee was skeptical about this claim at first due to having, over the years, seen many

⁹² See footnote #5.

⁹³ Public Safety Canada, “Follow UP Questions for Public Safety Canada regarding: Recommendations and PSEPC/Portfolio Responses to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence (SCONSAD)’ (August 30, 2006),” February 26, 2008, pg 7-8.

promised programs that never saw the light of day. However, the Committee was surprised to see this promise armed with some teeth – teeth known as the Canadian Radio-Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

The Committee was delighted to hear testimony from Scott Hutton, Associate Executive Director of the CRTC, who told us that if private industry does not get its act together to implement a national public alerting system by next year, the CRTC will act unilaterally to force private industry to get its act together. His testimony:

Scott Hutton, Associate Executive Director, CRTC: In February 2007, the commission challenged emergency management officials, broadcasters and companies that distribute broadcasting services, such as cable or satellite companies, to work together on a voluntary basis to build and operate an emergency alert system.

In issuing this challenge, we gave the industry two years, or until March 1, 2009 to come up with a workable system. Following this decision, we acted quickly to remove a major regulatory barrier that would have interfered with the implementation of an emergency alert system. This was done by amending our broadcast distribution regulations to allow companies that distribute broadcasting services to insert warnings into a program without first having to obtain the network's consent.

We hope that a spirit of cooperation will prevail in the industry and that our deadline will be met. However, we will not hesitate to act if, by March 1, 2009, broadcasters and companies that distribute broadcasting services have not come together to build and operate a national emergency alert system. The commission has the necessary powers to designate a single entity to serve as the system's aggregator and to ensure that the system is funded by the industry.⁹⁴

What? Did one of the top officials from CRTC just testify that if private industry hasn't implemented a national public alerting system by the first of March 2009, the CRTC would unilaterally force them to comply? It certainly sounds that way. But just to clarify:

⁹⁴ Scott Hutton, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 4, 2008, Issue 4, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

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Scott Hutton, Associate Executive Director, CRTC: ...Let me repeat on behalf of the CRTC: if a national emergency alert system has not been implemented on a voluntary basis by March 1, 2009, the Commission will use its powers to designate a single entity to operate the system and to ensure it is properly funded.

This project is of the utmost importance to the safety and security of all Canadians, and we will do everything within our power to ensure the successful implementation of a reliable system. In the absence of a national emergency alert system, some Canadian municipalities have established telephone-based notification services to warn the public of an imminent danger or to communicate with the public during an emergency situation.⁹⁵

The Committee seldom hears such bold claims from government agencies, and we will hold the CRTC to its word on this important issue.

Three Key Features

Even better, officials from Public Safety Canada, the CRTC and Industry Canada who testified before the Committee on February 4, 2008 also promised Canadians three key features of this national public alerting system:

First Feature: The system would be able to turn threat detection into public notification in 3 minutes.

Serge Beaudoin, Director General, Preparedness and Recovery of Public Safety Canada: The system we are trying to build is one that will allow us to get to the public within two or three minutes, regardless of where you are.⁹⁶

Second Feature: The system would be accessible by local first responders.

Senator Tkachuk: If there is an emergency in Prince Albert, you want Prince Albert to know; you do not care if I know in Ottawa. Why do you say you want everyone to know, regardless where we are?

⁹⁵ Scott Hutton, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 4, 2008, Issue 4, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

⁹⁶ Serge Beaudoin, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 4, 2008, Issue 4, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

Serge Beaudoin, Director General, Preparedness and Recovery of Public Safety Canada: Let me clarify. We want a national public alerting system, but for the most part it will be used at the local level. By national, we mean a system that works from coast to coast to coast; however, using geocodes, you can specify the population you want to alert.⁹⁷

.....

Senator Day: Who will decide if the municipalities' alert should go through the system?

Chaouki Dakdouki, Director, Regulatory Policy and Planning, Industry Canada: That is why we had this working group. During an emergency, we will not sit down and come up with a committee to discuss who will do what. We have to solve these issues up front. The decision is that whoever is in charge of the emergency will be able to issue the alert.⁹⁸

.....

Senator Day: Let us talk about the authority. Suppose that I am the mayor of a municipality and I have an emergency. To whom do I have to go to get authority to use this system?

Serge Beaudoin, Director General, Preparedness and Recovery of Public Safety Canada: To use this system, you would go to your provincial emergency management office initially. If your province accredits you, then you would have access directly to the system. If you are running a 24-7 operation and have certain parameters to meet, you can then issue the warning directly to your population.⁹⁹

Third Feature: The system would utilize Radio, Television, Wireless devices and Internet.

Serge Beaudoin, Director General, Preparedness and Recovery of Public Safety Canada: To clarify, this will be an automated process. It will be housed in the Government Operations Centre, to ensure that it has technical support 24 hours a day, but it is an automated process. It will go through, using technology to authenticate who they are getting it from, and they will be issuing it to all — radio, television, wireless and the Internet. The idea is to send it to the various

⁹⁷ Serge Beaudoin, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 4, 2008, Issue 4, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

⁹⁸ Chaouki Dakdouki, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 4, 2008, Issue 4, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

⁹⁹ Serge Beaudoin, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 4, 2008, Issue 4, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

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sources and let the private sector deal with their subscribers, the Canadian public, directly.¹⁰⁰

This is a start. But a reliable system will require 100 percent participation. The word “voluntary” should not be part of the equation, unless every Canadian company broadcasting to the Canadian public comes on board. In the end, some broadcasters may have to be told to come on board.

Senator Banks: I hope you have in the CRTC the authority to bring into place the recommendation this committee made years ago, long after others had recommended it, too, that this will be done. I hope this will be mandatory among broadcasters and other means of communication in the country.

Mr. Hutton, do you have the authority to do that?

Mr. Hutton: Yes, we do.

Senator Banks: Will you do it?

Mr. Hutton: We will do it.¹⁰¹

While 2004 would have been better than 2009 or 2010, the Committee congratulates the CRTC on moving ahead on this.

Increasingly, the challenge will be to establish a reliable emergency warning system that funnels warnings through different types of medium, including broadcasting, phones and the Internet.

There are legal and technical hurdles to doing this, but the Committee intends to hear further testimony as to the best means of achieving those objectives.

¹⁰⁰ Serge Beaudoin, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 4, 2008, Issue 4, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

¹⁰¹ Scott Hutton, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 4, 2008, Issue 4, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

Problem 8: ***Lack of First Responder Interoperability***

Mr. Mike Boyd, Police Chief of the Edmonton Police Services: There is also the never-ending issue of interoperability of communications. We have not resolved the issue of being able to talk with one another when we need to work together, especially in an emergency.¹⁰²

There is not a reliable strategy or system in place to adequately equip Canada's first responder community with interoperable communications devices to use in times of emergency. Such systems need to be put in place by all orders of government, with leadership coming from the federal level.

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS (2004)

- **Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness (PSEPC) should enter into negotiations to equip the entire first responder community nationwide with handheld communications devices, with the federal government funding at least a third of the cost, with remaining costs to be divided between the provinces / territories and municipalities.**
- **Each order of government should create the capacity to communicate with its first responders, within itself and with other orders of government. All systems should have wireless back-ups.**¹⁰³

¹⁰² Mike Boyd, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 25, 2008, Issue 5, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

¹⁰³ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 63-64. See recommendations #15.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS (2006 – 2008)

Handheld Communication Devices

Regarding the recommendation that Public Safety Canada should equip the nation's first responders with handheld communications devices, Public Safety Canada wrote on August 30, 2006:

“The Department of Public Safety recognizes the importance of first responders being able to communicate with each other to minimize loss of life and ensure the safety and security of Canadians when a major event, either planned or unplanned, occurs.

The development of seamless interoperable radio communications throughout the country requires collaboration among all public safety agencies, across all jurisdictions. Such communications would enable first responders to talk across disciplines and jurisdictions via radio communications systems, exchanging voice and/or data with one another on demand, in real time, when needed, and as authorized.

It is recognized that radio communications interoperability cannot be solved by any one entity alone – addressing the issue requires collaboration among all public safety agencies. A federal/provincial/territorial working group of emergency management partners is being established to incorporate input from all jurisdictions and assist in determining how interoperable communications can be achieved.”¹⁰⁴

Working Groups Just Not Working

A working group is being established. Those six words should be carved in stone in front of Public Safety Canada's Ottawa Headquarters. One sure sign that nothing much is happening is the establishment of one more working group.

¹⁰⁴ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg. 14.

Inter-Governmental Communication

Regarding the recommendation that communication infrastructure be created between each order of government and its first responders (with wireless backups), Public Safety Canada wrote on August 30, 2006:

“PSEPC has Business Continuity Plans (BCPs), and related policies and governance. Critical services have been identified, and associated redundancies are in place for both power and communications. This includes backup power to run critical computer systems, as well as cellular and satellite telephones. The satellite telephones have fixed and wireless capabilities. A Business Impact Analysis is currently underway to update and confirm critical services as listed. As business continuity planning is an iterative process, the department continues to develop, update, and test for full compliance with the Government Security Policy (GSP), including the BCP and Management of Information Technology Security (MITS) Standards.¹⁰⁵

The Government is working in other areas to improve communication between departments and with other levels of government. For example, the PSEPC is responsible for interoperability and the integration of public safety and security (PS&S) information between departments and agencies in Canada. This work is intended to improve information sharing across a range of organizations in support of public safety and security, while adhering to the *Privacy Act* and the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

As part of this responsibility, a National Radio Communications Interoperability Strategy is being explored, as described under Recommendation #14, in consultation with the PS&S sector. This initiative will enable PS&S agencies to communicate across disciplines and jurisdictions with one another on demand, in real time, when needed, and as authorized.”¹⁰⁶

On September 19, 2007, regarding the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FTP) working group of emergency management partners, Library of Parliament researchers¹⁰⁷ asked Public Safety Canada: “What is the status of this FPT working group, and what accomplishments has the group achieved in furthering interoperable communications for Canada’s first responders?” In February 2008 Public Safety Canada responded:

¹⁰⁵ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg. 14.

¹⁰⁶ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg. 15.

¹⁰⁷ See footnote #5.

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“Public Safety Canada continues to seek a formal Federal-Provincial-Territorial forum to discuss the challenges and solutions to radio communications interoperability and to facilitate consultations with public safety stakeholders. The Department is engaging with provinces on this issue, particularly with jurisdictions which are planning to upgrade or replace their radio communication networks in the near future: It is also facilitating discussions between provinces and between provincial officials and representatives of federal organizations that operate within these jurisdictions.”¹⁰⁸

The Language of Lassitude

Public Safety Canada is “seeking a formal FPT forum,” and is “engaging with the provinces” and “facilitating discussions between provinces”. The reality is that this issue has *not* been discussed at any of the annual meetings of the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Meeting of Ministers responsible for Emergency Management in recent years.¹⁰⁹ If this issue is as important as the government response implies, then why can’t it be included in the formal agenda? Who are they “facilitating and engaging” with?

On September 19, 2007, regarding integration and interoperability, Library of Parliament researchers¹¹⁰ asked Public Safety Canada: “What are the specific organizations in the "range of organizations" mentioned above? What is the status of this work on interoperability and integration?” Public Safety Canada responded on February 26, 2008:

“The specific organizations in the "range of organizations" mentioned above include the following:

1. Canadian Air Transport Security Authority (CATSA)
2. Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)
3. Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS)
4. Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)
5. Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS)
6. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)
7. Communications Security Establishment (CSE)

¹⁰⁸ Public Safety Canada, “Follow UP Questions for Public Safety Canada regarding: ‘Recommendations and PSEPC/Portfolio Responses to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence (SCONSAD)’ (August 30, 2006),” February 26, 2008, pg 8.

¹⁰⁹ There is no indication that interoperability for first responders was part of the formal agenda for discussion in the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Meeting of Ministers responsible for Emergency Management in 2002 & 2004-2008 sessions. (There was no meeting of FPT emergency managers in 2003). See the Canadian Intergovernmental Conference Secretariat http://www.scics.gc.ca/menu_e.html

¹¹⁰ See footnote #5.

8. Correctional Service Canada (CSC)
9. Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO)
10. Department of National Defence (DND)
11. Environment Canada (EC)
12. Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada (FINTRAC)
13. Foreign Affairs Canada (FAC)
14. Justice and Deputy Attorney General (Justice)
15. National Parole Board (NPB)
16. Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)
17. Office of the Privacy Commissioner (PrivCom)
18. Passport Canada (PPT)
19. Privy Council Office (PCO)
20. Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)
21. Public Safety Canada (PS)
22. Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC)
23. Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)
24. Statistics Canada (StatsCan)
25. Transport Canada (TC)
26. Treasury Board of Canada, Secretariat (TBS)

Public Safety Canada is currently refining an interoperability policy framework and action plan in consultation with the Privy Council Office (PCO) and Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) Chief Information Office Branch.”¹¹¹

Get the Users Involved

Regarding national radio communications interoperability, the Committee asked: “What is the status of the National Radio Communications Interoperability strategy? What set of programs or actions will this strategy lead to?” Public Safety Canada responded February 26, 2008:

“A Federal Committee of key departments (Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Department of National Defence, Canada Border Services Agency, Canadian Coast Guard, Industry Canada and Defence Research and Development Canada) has been established, under the leadership of Public Safety Canada, to assist in the creation of a National Public Safety Radio Communications Strategy. The Committee is now examining, as a matter of priority, challenges and prospects for a way forward on specific initiatives, such as:

¹¹¹ Public Safety Canada, “Follow UP Questions for Public Safety Canada regarding: ‘Recommendations and PSEPC/Portfolio Responses to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence (SCONSAD)’ (August 30, 2006),” February 26, 2008, pg 9.

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- Radio Spectrum management and the articulation of public safety requirements;
- Assisting in the development of cross-border interoperable radio communications;
- Governance issues, involving multiple jurisdictions and mandates; and,
- Policy development to guide first responder communities in the planning, implementation, and use of interoperable radio communications equipment.”¹¹²

If the National Radio Communications Interoperability strategy meant to, as Public Safety Canada stated, “enable first responders to talk across disciplines and jurisdictions via radio communications systems, exchanging voice and/or data with one another on demand, in real time, when needed, and as authorized,” *then why are federal bureaucrats the only ones involved in developing the strategy?*

CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT

There is good news and there is bad news.

Good news: just under 2/3 of municipalities we surveyed told us that their first responders have access to some sort of interoperable communications (62%).

Bad news: less than 1/5 of the municipalities we surveyed have interoperable communications with their nearby provincial and federal partners (17%).

Respondents like Trent Elyea, Community Emergency Management Coordinator for Orillia wrote: “Our police are Provincial, our ambulance is County and we are municipal. All three operate on different systems and have totally different operating abilities.”

Interoperability during an emergency can be the difference between life and death – a critical fact that is understood full well by the emergency management folks in Alberta. Alberta is

¹¹² Public Safety Canada, “Follow UP Questions for Public Safety Canada regarding: ‘Recommendations and PSEPC/Portfolio Responses to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence (SCONSAD)’ (August 30, 2006),” February 26, 2008, pg 10.

an example of a province that clearly understands why interoperable communications are a necessity for first responders, and has taken action to do something about it. On February 11, 2008 David Hodgins, Managing Director, Alberta Emergency Management Agency testified in to the Committee:

Mr. Hodgins: “With respect to the safety of the public and first responders, communications is an absolute priority. Again, on a personal note, having been involved with many emergency events and exercises in preparation for emergency events, the first thing brought forward as a result of the post-event analysis is communications that could have been better or should have been better. Police need to be able to better talk to fire officials and paramedics, and the system generally needs to be able to better communicate in the interests of getting the right resources to the right place at the right time.”¹¹³

Not only does Alberta recognise the problem, they have an action plan to accomplish the goal and plug the holes. David Hodgins said to the Committee on February 11, 2008:

Mr. Hodgins: “Another paradigm associated with creating joined up systems is Alberta’s first responder radio communications system project. This proposed multi-million-dollar system will provide modern communications equipment to ensure police, paramedics, firefighters, search and rescue personnel, as well as a myriad of support and essential resource agencies are able to connect and communicate with each other during day-to-day events as required, and, in particular, during major emergency events.”¹¹⁴

This project that David Hodgins speaks of is called the Alberta First Responders Radio Communications System (AFRRCS). This initiative is described on the AFRRCS website:

The Alberta First Responders Radio Communication System (AFRRCS) initiative is being conducted by the Solicitor General and Public Security. This project will replace the existing Government of Alberta and RCMP province-wide radio communications systems by 2010. It will also extend the radio system to municipalities which will

¹¹³ David Hodgins, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, Hearing Transcript*, February 11, 2008, Issue 5, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

¹¹⁴ David Hodgins, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, Hearing Transcript*, February 11, 2008, Issue 5, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

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enable communication between public safety agencies such as fire and ambulance.¹¹⁵

While the project is still in its consultation stage, there is a firm date for implementation and a process to be followed. In addition, the project also aims to provide interoperability to all actors— regardless of jurisdictional boundaries – and the Government of Alberta is working with the RCMP to jointly implement this system.¹¹⁶

We are not suggesting that the Federal government should plan such strategies for the provinces, but rather, encourage and help fund such provincial initiatives. Public Safety Canada's *National Public Safety Radio Communications Strategy* is a start: but will it be interoperable with other orders of government? Will the strategy involve sitting down with first responders and provincial governments and agreeing on interoperable communications for everyone involved in an emergency?

Public Safety Canada's *Reports on Plans and Priorities* mentions (2008-2009) "a radio interoperability strategy to enhance first responders' capacity to communicate with each other,"¹¹⁷ but this has been a one-paragraph promise in their departmental documents since 2006.¹¹⁸ Compare this to Alberta, who, within 2 years of planning, already has an end date of 2010 for its radio communications system. When will the federal government get moving?

¹¹⁵ The Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, *AAMDC YEAR IN REVIEW: 2007*, November 2007, pg 6. Available on the AAMDC website at: http://www.aamdc.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=301&Itemid=517

¹¹⁶ Royal Canadian Mounted Police, "News Release - Alberta: RCMP to issue enhanced body armour in response to HRSDC report," March 5, 2007. Available at http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ab/news/2007/Mayerthorpe_HRSDC_Mar05_e.htm

¹¹⁷ Public Safety Canada, *2008-2009 Report on Plans and Priorities*, March 31, 2008, pg 62.

¹¹⁸ The report states: "The Department is developing a framework for interoperability, including a long-term vision and strategic design to enable a fully coordinated approach to public safety and security that ensures effective information sharing while respecting the privacy of Canadians and the principle of accountability." Public Safety Canada, *2006-2007 Report on Plans and Priorities*, September 26, 2006, pg 30-31.

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee recommends that:

- 1. Public Safety Canada make first responder interoperability a specific item of discussion for the next iterations of the Federal Provincial Territorial Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Emergency Management.**
- 2. Public Safety Canada involve provincial and municipal partners in the development and implementation of its *National Public Safety Radio Communications Strategy* within two years (by 2010).**

Problem 9: ***First Responders Ignored***

Many first responders and local emergency managers believe that the federal government does not adequately consult them and does not understand what they need on the ground to do their jobs effectively.

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS (2004)

- **The Committee recommended that Public Safety Canada develop a greater sensitivity to the differing needs of the First Responders in communities across Canada**
- **The Committee recommended that the Minister of Public Safety Canada give direction to Public Safety Canada to restructure the national emergency preparedness system so that local concerns and needs form the core of preparedness planning and structures.¹¹⁹**

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE (2006)

Sensitivity Training or Wheel Spinning?

Regarding the Committee's recommendation that Public Safety develop a greater sensitivity to the differing needs of the First Responders in communities across Canada, Public Safety Canada wrote on August 30, 2006:

“PSEPC recognizes that first-line responders play a critical role in emergency management in Canada, given that most emergencies in Canada are managed locally. PSEPC continues to work towards a better understanding of first responder challenges and needs. PSEPC officials will continue to build relationships and partnerships with national first responder organizations.

¹¹⁹ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg 64. See Recommendation #16.

Information and support has proven beneficial in the development of a wide range of initiatives, ranging from funding for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) equipment to the development of a national urban search and rescue program (USAR). Dialogue with first responders on the subject of science and technology related to CBRN response occurs annually through a symposium led by the CBRN Research and Technology Initiative of Defence Research and Development Canada. Work to identify the most effective combination of emergency management tools such as national standards, best practices, and guidelines is on-going.¹²⁰

Joint initiatives with the volunteer sector are also underway. On May 8, 2006, the Minister of Public Safety and Secretary General of the Canadian Red Cross signed memoranda of understanding (MOU) which formalized their collaboration in matters of emergency management. Additional MOUs with other organizations are planned for the coming year. In addition, a Domestic Group on Emergency Management is being established to discuss policy and operational issues of mutual interest that arise in complex domestic emergencies. Joint activities would be targeted, including public communications, training opportunities and drills and exercises. Membership includes Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police; Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs; Canadian Centre for Emergency Preparedness; Canadian Red Cross; Canadian Volunteer Fire Services Association; Federation of Canadian Municipalities; Mennonite Disaster Services; Paramedics Association of Canada; Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada; Public Health Agency of Canada; St. John Ambulance; Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada; The Salvation Army, and will be expanded to include additional national voluntary and first responder associations.¹²¹

As well, several non-governmental organizations, such as the Search and Rescue Voluntary Association, receive departmental grants and contributions to address capacity and to fund innovative initiatives.

PSEPC and the RCMP will consult with Treasury Board and other departments to clarify the terminology for employees used by Treasury Board in announcements made to Public Service employees during an emergency. Utilization of terminology such as "essential and non-essential" which have very specific meanings under the labor relations act may create confusion for employees required by Departments and agencies to report to work during emergencies in order to sustain operations or support first responder roles. Language should be clarified and standardized within and across the Government of Canada and in

¹²⁰ Public Safety Canada, "Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD," August 30, 2006, pg 15.

¹²¹ Public Safety Canada, "Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD," August 30, 2006, pg 15.

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relevant documents such as business continuity plans, standard operating procedures and employee emergency contact messaging lines.¹²²

Everything the Department is *planning* makes sense. What doesn't make sense is how long it is taking to get a system in place that would funnel essential information from first responders to federal bureaucrats. In 2004, the Committee asked Public Safety Canada to start listening to first responders so as to deepen the federal government's understanding of what they need to properly do their jobs when Canadians are facing emergencies. What has happened in the ensuing four years? The Department has hosted a symposium, signed a MOU with the Red Cross, established a Domestic Group on Emergency Management and given a grant to the Search and Rescue Voluntary Association. And that's it. The one item clearly relevant to the Government's need to improve its capacity to 'listen to first responders' is the establishment of a Domestic Group on Emergency Management. But we have seen no evidence of any accomplishments on the part of this organization since it was allegedly founded in 2005.¹²³

Where are the First Responders in National Emergency Planning & Response?

Regarding the recommendation that Public Safety Canada restructure the national emergency preparedness system so that local concerns and needs form the core of preparedness planning and structures, Public Safety Canada responded on August 30, 2006:

“Public safety is a shared responsibility, which begins with the individual and moves through jurisdictional authorities. As outlined in the Emergency Preparedness Act and its successor, the proposed Emergency Management Act, the federal government works with, and through provincial/territorial governments to enhance local emergency preparedness and support these jurisdictions during an emergency. PSEPC is engaging provinces and territories to review and renew Canada's national emergency management system. This includes the modernization of the Emergency Preparedness Act (proposed Emergency Management Act), and the Federal, Provincial and Territorial (FPT)

¹²² Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg 16.

¹²³ The only official documentation of the Domestic Group on Emergency Management is found in a 2006 departmental performance report, which states: “consultations were held on the creation of a Domestic Group on Emergency Management (first responders and NGOs).” Public Safety Canada, *2005-2006 Departmental Performance Report*, November 23, 2006, pg. 30.

Emergency Management Action Plan, which aims to strengthen comprehensive emergency management across four interdependent functions of prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. In addition, to complement new federal legislation, the *Federal Policy for Emergencies* (1995) will be updated. New mechanisms to consult stakeholders at all levels, from local to international, are being considered to strengthen emergency management and national security in Canada.

Recognizing the need for enhanced emergency cooperation, Federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) Ministers responsible for emergency management agreed, in January 2005 that governments would work together to improve and enhance the emergency response framework. To this end, PSEPC has been leading the development of the National Emergency Response System (NERS), which will ensure a more responsive and harmonized federal and national response to all types of emergencies.

A core principle of the NERS is *concurrent jurisdictional response*, which acknowledges that emergency response can require action from all levels of government, and that these parties all have different areas of responsibility. The NERS facilitates the communication, cooperation, and coordination of actions by all parties involved, while at the same time ensuring that jurisdictional boundaries are respected and maintained.

To date, the focus has been on the development of the federal component of the NERS, the Federal Emergency Response System (FERS). A key element of the FERS is the development of a FPT standard interface and coordination mechanism to support common emergency response processes, such as joint FPT contingency planning, public communications, and operations.

Significant progress has been made through the development and implementation of regional concepts of operation to administer FERS at the regional and provincial/territorial level. The federal regional arrangements ensure a harmonized federal regional response of support and assistance that may be needed from the federal government during emergencies. They are designed to facilitate communication, cooperation, and coordination of actions by all parties involved, while at the same time ensuring that jurisdictional boundaries are respected and maintained.

The PSEPC Regional Offices provide coordination and support to regional federal families. The Regional Offices also provide a single point of contact for the provinces and territories for emergency management matters.”¹²⁴

¹²⁴ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg 18-19.

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Library of Parliament researchers¹²⁵ followed up with Public Safety Canada on September 19, 2007 by asking: “What mechanisms does the National Emergency Response System (NERS) include for the federal government to delivery vital information to first responders in a timely fashion during an emergency?” Public Safety Canada responded on February 26, 2008:

“The Public Safety Regional Director will provide appropriate representation in the provincial/territorial Emergency Operations Centre as required. The responsibilities of the Regional Director are to facilitate the interchange of information between the provincial and territorial Emergency Operations Centre, the Federal coordinating Centre and the Government of Canada Operations Centre; to coordinate regional federal response in collaboration with other federal regional representatives; and to support or enable provincial/territorial requests for assistance. The Government Operations Centre also plays a key role by communicating vital information simultaneously to the regional Director and the provincial/territorial Emergency Operations Centre.

Provinces and territories support first responders during an emergency, while the federal government supports the province and/or territory.

Provinces and territories are responsible for communications with first responders within their jurisdictions as are federal institutions responsible for communications with federal first responders.”¹²⁶

Planning Toward the Next Generation of Wheel Spinning

It’s fine that “significant progress has been made through the development and implementation of regional concepts of operation to administer FERS [the Federal Emergency Response System] at the regional and provincial/territorial level,” but again, how does that involve local first responders? The government response outlines a system of concurrent FPT jurisdictional response – which again, leaves municipalities (and first responders) out of the loop.

Our original recommendation prompted the question: how has the Government improved its delivery of what first responders say they need?

¹²⁵ See footnote #5.

¹²⁶ Public Safety Canada, “Follow UP Questions for Public Safety Canada regarding: Recommendations and PSEPC/Portfolio Responses to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence (SCONSAD)’ (August 30, 2006),” February 26, 2008, pg 12.

For all the acronyms and lengthy statements in the Government response, we have yet to find an answer.

CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT

If average, intelligent Canadians were asked what is required most in times of emergencies, they might respond:

- **Competent, well-equipped responders**
- **Timely responses**
- **Clarity of command**

They probably wouldn't respond: "What we really need when things get tough is a bureaucratic maze in which those responsible for emergency response systems are wandering around trying to avoid treading on one another's toes."

But that is what the priority seems to be in Public Safety Canada's 2008 response to the Committee's question as to what mechanisms are in place to ensure timely responses to emergencies.

The paucity of direct communication between the federal government and first responders is a recurring theme in every aspect of emergency management in Canada, including

- **The secretiveness over the location and contents of National Emergency Stockpile System (NESS) caches**
- **Lack of funding for ongoing maintenance of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) and Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) response teams**
- **Lack of flexibility in Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) funding**
- **The lack of leadership in formulating best practices**

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It is revealing that the annual meeting of ministers responsible for emergency management does not include representatives from local governments. How can there be truly useful discussions about roles and responsibilities in emergency management without municipalities at the table? It is not surprising that our surveys show that municipal emergency managers are sometimes confused and frequently frustrated with federal government processes.

John Ash, Emergency Manager for the City of Ottawa, is one example. An excerpt from his testimony before the Committee:

Mr. Ash: ...We say, let us sit down and talk about what that expectation (sic). Let us throw the cards on the table to say, "This is what it costs us to provide this level of service." Perhaps there is a formula or some way we can equate added benefit to the city. We want to have that dialogue. We want to be frank and candid, throw the cards on the table and say this is where we are at, so we can close the gaps if necessary.

Senator Tkachuk: Are you pushing for that dialogue now?

Mr. Ash: Yes.

Senator Tkachuk: Are they being helpful or are they stalling you? What is happening? Maybe we can help you.

Mr. Ash: It was challenging for me, because I spent probably two years trying to find the right person to talk to.

Senator Nancy Ruth: We have the same problem.

Mr. Ash: I say that with some understanding of the complexity because there is each individual department. My issues are about the government and not individual departments. Whether it is a municipal pipe that comes into the various buildings, I need to know about the dependency on the water, because we are responsible for that. If we do not have that dialogue holistically, as the federal government to the City of Ottawa, it will be difficult for us to prioritize critical infrastructure and all those kinds of things.

Coming back to your question, we understand clearly that there is a benefit. However, we want to ensure that we are both talking about apples

and apples and that there is a clear expectation of what service will be provided and the cost for that service.¹²⁷

The Committee agrees with the recommendation of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), who, in a February 2007 submission to Finance Minister Jim Flaherty wrote:

“Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (PSEPC) should commit to a process of consultation that provides municipal governments with the opportunity to participate in national emergency preparedness and management planning (FCM’s inclusion on the Domestic Group on Emergency Management is a good first step), leading to a more thorough examination of responsibilities and funding for next year’s federal budget. This should include, for example, increased funding to the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) for municipalities, as well as funding for protecting and hardening critical infrastructure and for modifications to the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA).”¹²⁸

In the 2008 report *Benchmark: A Report on the Key Issues and Challenges Facing Canadian Municipalities*, a survey conducted by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities concluded that “overall, Canadians feel that there is a lack of co-operation between the levels of government regarding policing and emergency preparedness.”¹²⁹

That sentiment conforms with the input of municipal officials responding to our survey as well as witnesses appearing before the Committee. Sue O’Sullivan, Deputy Chief of Operations Support, Ottawa Police Service, lamented the lack of an integral and continuing relationship among governments on emergency preparedness:

Sue O’Sullivan, Deputy Chief, Operations Support, Ottawa Police Service: When we talk about emergency planning — we talk about an all-hazards approach, be it terrorism or a natural disaster — when there is consequence-management required, every level of government,

¹²⁷ John Ash, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, January 28, 2008, Issue 4, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

¹²⁸ Federation of Canadian Municipalities, *Pre-Budget Submission*, February 13, 2007, pg 10. See Recommendation 3d. Available at <http://www.lmp-pgt.fcm.ca/English/View.asp?mp=532&x=787>

¹²⁹ Federation of Canadian Municipalities, *Benchmark: A Report on the Key Issues and Challenges Facing Canadian Municipalities*, April 15, 2008, pg 14.

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municipal, provincial and federal, has a mandate, and that is okay. We need to plan together strategically and leverage one another's assets and resources. The federal government has priorities in terms of that, but if they are not coordinated, there are limited assets. The reality is that in any crisis — be it natural disaster, terrorism or whatever the nature of the crisis is, Katrina or 9/11, for example — the first 24 to 48 hours will be local response. When we talk about preparing, Canada's capacity to respond is integrally connected to local and provincial capacity. When we look at how the three levels of government will respond, we need to be planning together. I do not want the federal government's mandate, but I want an integral and continual relationship.¹³⁰

The Committee understands the constitutional division of responsibilities among jurisdictions. However, there is no jurisdictional impediment to sitting down with both municipal and provincial partners to hash out who does what, and how, nor should there be any impediment to having federal officials listening directly to municipal officials as to what their needs are on the ground. The provincial and territorial governments can sit in on the conversations if there is concern over jurisdictional niceties.

The Committee strongly recommends that Public Safety Canada – as the lead federal agency responsible for national emergency preparedness – become better acquainted with the day-to-day responsibilities, challenges and needs facing Canada's first responder community through direct contact with municipal representatives. All employees at Public Safety Canada responsible for emergency management policy should be exposed to a wide range of first responders in police, fire fighting and emergency medical services.

Public Safety Canada employees need to spend time with local police, firefighters, Tactical/Explosives Units, K-9 Police Service Dog Units, Public Order and Ground Search and Rescue Units, Watch Inspectors and everyone else involved in emergency responses, including communication centres.

¹³⁰ Sue O'Sullivan, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, January 28, 2008, Issue 4, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

The leveraging of necessary assets and resources among all levels of government only makes sense. The burden is on federal leaders to make such coordination happens.

THE COMMITTEE REITERATES ITS 2004 RECOMMENDATION:

In 2004, the Committee recommended that Public Safety Canada develop a greater sensitivity to the differing needs of the first responders in communities across Canada.

To further assist Public Safety Canada develop that greater sensitivity, the Committee has two new recommendations.

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The Committee recommends that in hiring new personnel for the formation and implementation of emergency management policy, Public Safety Canada give first priority to persons with field experience in the first responder community.**
- 2. The Committee recommends that “hands on” experience with first responders be required as training for all current Public Safety Canada employees who work in the area of emergency management policy in Canada, starting with the Deputy Minister and working down the management hierarchy.**

Problem 10: ***Poor Federal Leadership*** ***on Critical Infrastructure Protection***

Critical infrastructure includes all the essential nuts and bolts that Canadians require to keep their society functioning effectively – everything from power grids to computer networks, water systems to roads. Protecting this broad range of assets is not a simple matter.

Canada defines its national critical infrastructure (CI) as: “facilities, networks and assets which, if disrupted or destroyed, would have a serious impact on the health, safety, security or economic well-being of Canadians or the effective functioning of governments in Canada.”¹³¹

Such a definition places critical infrastructure protection as a part of national security. The security and safety of Canadians is a fundamental responsibility of the federal government. As well, the passage of *The Emergency Management Act* in 2007 affirmed federal authority over critical infrastructure protection, adding a legal obligation for the federal government to play a leadership role.¹³²

The Committee understands that critical infrastructure protection is a complex issue. Critical infrastructure is often jointly owned or at least shared by different levels of government inside and outside Canadian borders. Its protection may require input from numerous stakeholders, including several federal departments and agencies, provincial governments, municipal governments and private owner/operators. Approximately eighty-five percent of Canada’s critical infrastructure is owned and operated by private industry or governments other than the federal government.¹³³

¹³¹ Public Safety Canada, *National Critical Infrastructure Assurance Program*, Discussion Paper, 2002.

¹³² Martin Rudner, “Protecting Canada’s Energy Infrastructure Against Terrorism: Mapping a Proactive Strategy”, *Critical Infrastructure Protection Policy Research Series, No. 1*, (Canadian Centre of Intelligence and Security Studies at Carleton University: March 2008).

¹³³ Canada, “National Critical Infrastructure Protection Program,” *Emergency Preparedness Digest*, (Jan-March, 2002), pg. 4.

Given its minority standing in the ownership of critical infrastructure, why does the federal government have the lead role in protecting it? Because protecting critical infrastructure is a matter of national security. Other private and public players can own and maintain critical infrastructure, but protecting it requires coordination of all these interests. The federal government must conduct the orchestra if national interests are to be protected.

The Problem as we saw it in 2004: The federal government has no central clearinghouse for identifying Canada's critical infrastructure and for keeping all stakeholders informed and otherwise prepared to play their required roles in protecting it.

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION (2004)

- **The Committee recommended that the Public Safety Canada be required to:**
 - **compile and maintain in cooperation with every municipality in Canada lists of the perceived vulnerabilities, emergency response assets, and shortfalls in assets and capabilities;**
 - **hold meetings with provincial / territorial counterparts to discuss the deficiencies revealed as a result of the recommendation above; and**
 - **conduct national emergency exercises in cooperation with other orders of government and prepare analyses on the "lessons learned".**¹³⁴

¹³⁴ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 64. See recommendations #17 B, C and D.

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GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS (2006 – 2008)

Regarding the first recommendation that Public Safety Canada compile and maintain lists of municipality perceived vulnerabilities, emergency response assets, and shortfalls, Public Safety Canada wrote to the Committee on August 30, 2006:

“Under section 4(1) (f) of the proposed *Emergency Management Act* the Public Safety Minister would coordinate Government of Canada activities relating to emergency management with those of the provinces/territories and support the emergency management activities of the provinces/territories. Under section 4 (1) (r) the sharing of information with the federal government would be facilitated. Under section 6 (2) all federal ministers would include elements in their emergency plans that take into account any programs, arrangements or other measures to assist provincial/territorial government, and through, them municipal governments. FPT¹³⁵ regional plans would also be taken into account.

Work is also underway through the National Critical Infrastructure Assurance Program (NCTAP) to address issues relating to vulnerability assessments and emergency management in partnership with the P/Ts¹³⁶ and the private sector. For example, New Brunswick, with funding from PSEPC, developed a provincial Critical Infrastructure Model Program that has been shared with other provinces and territories. This model provides methodologies for vulnerability assessments and security plans.”¹³⁷

What a Good Idea!

The Committee applauds the splendid idea that an Act was to be put in place that would direct the Public Safety Minister to take charge of coordinating emergency management of critical infrastructure with the provinces and territories (although we would have added the municipalities and the private sector).

¹³⁵ “FPT” refers to Federal/Provincial/Territorial

¹³⁶ “P/Ts” refers to Provinces/Territories

¹³⁷ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg. 17.

Which raises the question: How will the Minister do this?

There was no indication in this response that the Government had got on with compiling a list of perceived vulnerabilities, emergency assets, and shortfalls in cooperation with every other stakeholder connected to this problem. That doesn't require an Act.

Instead, the response informed us that the Act would take care of things, and that New Brunswick had gone ahead and developed a model program.

Fora is the Plural for Forum

Regarding the second recommendation that Public Safety Canada hold meetings with provincial / territorial counterparts to discuss the deficiencies revealed as a result of an assessment of gaps in the protection of critical infrastructure, Public Safety Canada wrote to the Committee on August 30, 2006:

“Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) fora have been established and meet regularly at the ministerial, deputy ministerial and senior official levels relating to emergency management.

Through these fora, the federal government and provinces and territories are jointly addressing key issues relating to emergency response, disaster financial assistance, critical infrastructure protections, training and exercises, public alerting, and disaster mitigation.”¹³⁸

So the federal government, provinces and territories have met to discuss this issue. That answers the question the Committee asked. We should also have asked for assurances that there be input from the municipalities and private sector, who know a lot about how the nuts and bolts work and where the vulnerabilities are. But we did not. Our mistake.

¹³⁸ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg. 17.

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Testing and Documenting Protective Capacity

Regarding the third recommendation that national emergency exercises be conducted in cooperation with other orders of government and prepare analyses on “lessons learned”, Public Safety Canada wrote on August 30, 2006:

“PSEPC’s National Exercises Division is developing an overarching national exercise program. Regular meetings and briefings are held with federal, provincial and territorial partners, and several exercises have been successfully delivered. Development work on future exercises is ongoing.

In addition, the division has sponsored two offerings of the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Master Exercise Practitioner Program, augmented with pertinent Canadian documentation. Approximately 70 federal government employees in key public safety departments and agencies, and selected individuals from provincial and municipal emergency management and first-responder communities have been trained to the same exercise methodology standard.

Under sections 4 (1) (n) and (o) and 6 (1) (c) of the proposed *Emergency Management Act* (Bill C-12 tabled May 8, 2006), PSEPC would legislatively fulfill the provision to conduct exercises with other jurisdictions and promote a common approach to emergency management including the adoption of standards and best practices.”¹³⁹

This response was encouraging. Joint training exercises are essential to effective emergency responses.

Still Waiting on a Strategy

On September 19, 2007, regarding the National Critical Infrastructure Assurance Program (NCIAP), Library of Parliament researchers¹⁴⁰ asked: “What is the status of the NCIAP? How specifically are vulnerability assessments included in the Program?” Public Safety Canada wrote to the Committee on February 26, 2008 and said:

¹³⁹ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg.7-18.

¹⁴⁰ See footnote #5.

“The National Critical Infrastructure Assurance Program (NCIAP) is an ongoing collaboration between private sector partners and Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) governments. The goals of these partnerships are to provide a national infrastructure.

The success of the NCIAP is being built upon by recent efforts by the Government of Canada working with its provincial/territorial and private sector partners to set a national direction for critical infrastructure protection in Canada. This national direction will be articulated in Canada’s first National Strategy for Critical Infrastructure Protection. Tying together the need for coordinated action across all jurisdictions and sectors, the draft Strategy and its supporting action plan emphasize the central importance of a risk management approach to protect critical infrastructure and effectively responding to disruptions. This proposed approach goes beyond vulnerability assessments to recommend a broad consideration of the other essential risk elements - threats to critical infrastructure as well as impacts of critical infrastructure disruptions.

To move forward with this comprehensive risk management approach, FPT governments will collaborate with their critical infrastructure partners to develop all-hazards risk analyses. While the Government of Canada, in cooperation with the provinces and territories, will promote a common approach to critical infrastructure protection, and will share tools, lessons learned and best practices, stakeholders are ultimately responsible for implementing a risk management approach appropriate to their situation.

Public Safety Canada will be completing consultations with federal, provincial, territorial and other partners over the spring and summer, and hopes to finalize the strategy and action plan for consideration by FPT Ministers in early 2009.”¹⁴¹

“Public Safety Canada . . . hopes to finalize the strategy and action plan for consideration by FPT Ministers in early 2009.”

When those airliners hit the Twin Towers in Manhattan in 2001, awakening North Americans to their vulnerability, would anyone have guessed that it would take nearly a decade to produce a strategy to protect critical assets? And if it is going to take nearly a decade to get a strategy approved, how long will it take to translate that strategy into an action plan and put all the pieces in place to make it workable? Another decade?

¹⁴¹ “Follow UP Questions for Public Safety Canada regarding: ‘Recommendations and PSEPC/Portfolio Responses to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence (SCONSAD)’ (August 30, 2006),” February 26, 2008, pg. 13.

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The Answer to the Question on the Last Page is “Twelve”

On September 19, 2007, regarding the National Exercise Program, Library of Parliament researchers¹⁴² asked: “When will the development of the national exercise program be complete? How many exercises have been held, where have they been held, and who were the actors involved?” Public Safety Canada replied on February 26, 2008:

“The national exercise program target for "completion" is fiscal year 2008-2009. To date, a dozen exercises have been held across the country in British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Alberta (with participation of teams from British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and Nova Scotia).

Of these, four were focused on specific domestic emergency functions, three were related to Canada’s support to humanitarian aid/consequence (emergency) management through NATO, two addressed military aid to civilian authorities concurrently in both the United States and Canada, two examined cross-border interdependencies and implications for critical infrastructure and one focused on Canadian domestic response to the expanding effects of attacks on the United States and the United Kingdom.

The participants included federal departments and agencies, international counterparts, provincial government departments and agencies, critical infrastructure owner/operators and sector professional organizations, non-profit/charitable organizations, and first responders (police, fire and emergency medical services) -specifically Heavy Urban Search and Rescue teams.”¹⁴³

CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT

Lessons Learned?

Well, a dozen exercises is a good start.¹⁴⁴ The Committee would like to know whether anything was learned from these exercises, whether it has been documented, and – most importantly –

¹⁴² See footnote #5.

¹⁴³ “Follow UP Questions for Public Safety Canada regarding: ‘Recommendations and PSEPC/Portfolio Responses to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence (SCONSAD)’ (August 30, 2006),” February 26, 2008, pg. 14.

¹⁴⁴ In response to a Request for Information submitted by the Library of Parliament, Public Safety Canada, in a reply dated June 20, 2008, provided a detailed list of exercises - *live, functional, table-top, drill* and *orientation* that have been held since 2004.

whether it has been shared with first responders across the country. There is no point in bureaucrats reaching conclusions about what works and what doesn't if they aren't shared by those most responsible for making emergency systems work: the people on the ground.

Where is the Governance?

The *Position Paper on a National Critical Infrastructure Protection Strategy* (2004) states: “The Government of Canada’s position is that it will identify and assess its own [Critical Infrastructure]. In addition, the Government of Canada will *work with other levels of government and the private sector* to ensure that processes are in place to identify their critical infrastructures (or components thereof) as a measure to strengthen public safety.”¹⁴⁵

If the Government of Canada has indeed compiled a list of national critical infrastructure, there is no evidence that it has shared it with other levels of government or the private sector. Mr. Randy Hull, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for the City of Winnipeg told the Committee that he received information from private industry, not the federal government, regarding what was deemed to be critical infrastructure.

Mr. Hull: Certainly. I have learned from stakeholders, not government, about the critical infrastructure. By talking to MTS Allstream; Manitoba Hydro, which has major connections to the east, the west and the south; and the TransCanada Pipelines, for example, I have learned more about what those critical infrastructures are.

Winnipeg has an aqueduct system that brings in the water for two thirds of the population. When I asked whether that critical infrastructure would be added to the national critical infrastructure list, I was told, no, because it did not meet the criteria. Nationally, it would be of issue because if Winnipeg loses its water supply, I am sure the people in Ottawa would

¹⁴⁵ Public Safety Canada, *A Position Paper on a National Critical Infrastructure Protection Strategy*, November 2004.

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have some issue with that. In the second go around, it has been added to the critical infrastructure.¹⁴⁶

So the Government of Canada is clearly not consulting with the City of Winnipeg regarding what is on the “critical infrastructure” list. Who is it consulting with? The Committee’s 2007 survey of Canadian municipalities indicated that the federal government had not approached many of them regarding critical infrastructure.

- **Only 16 percent of respondents said the federal government has identified federal critical infrastructure – even fewer believe they have any responsibility for protecting federal critical infrastructure.**

Asked what assistance the federal government has provided to protect federal critical infrastructure, respondent John Allain, Moncton’s Director of Emergency Planning, replied:

The nature of federal government offices throughout the country is to brief senior management as events develop. They have no ability to be part of any response and no resources to be a player. Emergency plans in local offices are based on the assumption that local authorities will assist. These have never been formalized. Only one Department, Transport Canada has forwarded their emergency response plan for review and comment.

Good for Transport Canada, but other departments play a role in critical infrastructure protection. All parties need to know what needs to be protected and what their responsibilities are. According to a recent study on critical infrastructure protection in Canada, this is not happening:

“Although information sharing is usually considered to be of the utmost importance for dealing proactively and robustly with...threats, the Government of Canada has still not been able to establish a centralized, national clearinghouse for information pertaining to threats to critical national infrastructure for its own

¹⁴⁶ Randy Hull, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, March 3, 2008, Issue 6, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

PROBLEM 10

departments or agencies, or for sharing with provincial, territorial and municipal jurisdictions let alone private owner/operators.”¹⁴⁷

Public Safety Canada divides critical infrastructure into 10 key sectors. The lead for protecting each sector is assigned to one or more federal departments. (See following chart)

Sector		Department/Agency
1	Energy and Utilities	Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) Supported by: Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC), International Joint Commission (IJC), National Energy Board (NEB)
2	Communications and Information Technology	Industry Canada (IC) Supported by: Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness (PSEPC)
3	Finance	Finance Canada
4	Health Care	Health Canada (HC)
5	Food	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) Supported by: Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA), Health Canada
6	Water	Environment Canada (EC) Supported by: Health Canada
7	Transportation	Transport Canada (TC) Supported by: CBSA
8	Safety	Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness (PSEPC) Supported by: Health Canada / National Defence (DND)
9	Government	Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness (PSEPC) and Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS)
10	Manufacturing	Industry Canada Supported by: National Defence, Natural Resources Canada, Environment Canada

This looks good on paper, but how well is the chart translating into anything useful on the ground? If National Resources Canada is any example . . . not too well.

¹⁴⁷ Martin Rudner, “Protecting Canada’s Energy Infrastructure Against Terrorism: Mapping a Proactive Strategy”, *Critical Infrastructure Protection Policy Research Series, No. 1* (Canadian Centre of Intelligence and Security Studies at Carleton University: March 2008).

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The Committee has been told that Natural Resources Canada's *Energy Infrastructure Protection Division* was scheduled to hold classified briefings, twice a year, with private energy operators throughout the country, in collaboration with CSIS, the RCMP, the Integrated Threat Assessment Centre (ITAC), and Public Safety Canada. But this Spring's (2008) meeting was cancelled. Informed of this, the Minister of Public Safety said he was unaware of the program's cancellation and would have it reinstated.¹⁴⁸ To the best of the Committee's knowledge, that hadn't happened at the time of the release of this report.

Why was what appeared to be a useful federal program to better protect critical national infrastructure cancelled? Why did the Minister of Public Safety not know about its cancellation? Is the chart real, or a myth?

Where is the Strategy?

The efforts of the Government of Canada to set a "national direction for critical infrastructure protection in Canada" hinge on the publication of Canada's first National Strategy for Critical Infrastructure Protection. In the Government's *National Security Policy*, released in April 2004, it was announced: "the Government will work with provinces, territories and the private sector to define the Critical Infrastructure Protection Strategy for Canada"¹⁴⁹

The Committee notes the creation of Public Safety's National Critical Infrastructure Assurance Program (NCIAP) and its mandate to "provide a national framework for cooperative action and to build a resilient national critical infrastructure for all Canadians." The program's main tool for accomplishing this is "an ongoing forum" to be coordinated with other governments and private sector operators. Getting together is commendable, but why have Canadians had to wait for nearly a decade without

¹⁴⁸ Ian MacLeod, "Briefings cancelled without my knowledge..." *Ottawa Citizen*, April 15, 2008.

¹⁴⁹ Canada, *Securing an Open Society: Canada's National Security Policy*, April 2004.

the federal government formulating its long-awaited National Critical Infrastructure Protection Strategy?

A Short Sad History of
Public Safety Canada's
National Critical Infrastructure Protection Strategy

2004: Public Safety states that the strategy will be released in spring 2005.¹⁵⁰

2005: Public Safety states that the strategy will be released in fall 2005.¹⁵¹

2006: No comment on the strategy.¹⁵²

2007: Public Safety will obtain private and public sector endorsement of the Critical Infrastructure Protection Strategy in 2008.¹⁵³

2008: 'Ongoing development' of Critical Infrastructure Protection Strategy.¹⁵⁴

2009: Ministers expected to consider strategy.

Now, fast-forward to the testimony of Scott Broughton, Assistant Deputy Minister, Emergency Management, National Security Branch at Public Safety Canada, who appeared before the Committee on January 28, 2008:

Senator Meighen: Last April, the committee was told that the National Critical Infrastructure Protection Strategy was being finalized. Has it been? If not, when will it be finalized and made public?

Mr. Broughton: The strategy is a significant one that has to be worked out carefully with the provinces and territories. The vast majority of critical infrastructure is owned either by the private sector or by provinces and territories. The federal government has some. The national strategy was always targeted at being a collaborative effort across all jurisdictions and with the private sector to

¹⁵⁰ Public Safety Canada, *2004-2005 Report on Plans and Priorities*, October 8, 2004, pg. 25.

¹⁵¹ Public Safety Canada, *2005-2006 Report on Plans and Priorities*, March 24, 2005, pg. 24.

¹⁵² The *2006-2007 Report on Plans and Priorities*, released by Public Safety Canada on September 26, 2006 made no reference to national critical infrastructure protection strategies or programs.

¹⁵³ Public Safety Canada, *2007-2008 Report on Plans and Priorities*, March 29, 2007, pg. 25.

¹⁵⁴ Public Safety Canada, *2008-2009 Report on Plans and Priorities*, March 31, 2008, pg 35.

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ensure that the things that needed to happen around the critical infrastructure would happen. We have been working on it with our provincial and territorial colleagues over the last while. The federal-provincial-territorial ministers, in their recent meeting in Halifax, reviewed what stage the strategy is at. We have agreed to do a concentrated, consultative effort with the private sector in the coming weeks. Once we have done that, we will try to finalize the strategy in the next few months.

The latest word was contained in the PSC reply cited earlier in this section:

Public Safety Canada will be completing consultations with federal, provincial, territorial and other partners over the spring and summer, and hopes to finalize the strategy and action plan for consideration by FPT Ministers in early 2009.”¹⁵⁵

Once again, it’s just going to be a plan for ministers to consider. Even if they do decide that it is the right way to proceed, putting everything into place to make the strategy workable is going to take more time – a lot more time, if the pace of implementation is anything like the place of planning.

¹⁵⁵ Public Safety Canada, “Update on PSEPC/Portfolio on Reports from SCONSAD,” August 30, 2006, pg. 13.

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee recommends:

- 1. That Public Safety Canada share “lessons learned” from its National Exercise Program with First Responders throughout the country.**
- 2. The re-instatement of Natural Resources Canada’s Classified Briefings for Energy Sector Stakeholders.**
- 3. That models similar to Natural Resources Canada’s Classified Briefings for Energy Sector Stakeholders be introduced throughout the 10 Critical Infrastructure Sectors.**
- 4. The release of the National Critical Infrastructure Protection Strategy by the end of 2008.**

Problem 11: ***Emergency Ad Hockery***

The Problem as We Saw It in 2004: Six micro-organisms pose the greatest risk to Canadians: smallpox, anthrax, plague, botulism, tularemia and hemorrhagic fever. With the exception of smallpox, in 2004 Health Canada did not have a comprehensive emergency response plan in place to deal with any of them.

Four years later, the Committee is dismayed that Health Canada still hasn't developed anything that could be described as a reliable system for dealing with serious outbreaks of infectious diseases. This is a serious flaw in any country's emergency planning. Public Safety Canada, which has the responsibility of protecting Canadians, has not forced this issue with Health Canada to ensure the protection of Canadians in the event of an outbreak. Moreover, Public Safety Canada cannot get its own emergency response system in order.

Quite simply, ad hockery appears to be Canada's lead methodology for dealing with national emergencies.

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION (2004)

- **The Committee recommended Health Canada develop a national plan to counteract potential outbreaks of anthrax, plague, botulism, tularemia and hemorrhagic fever¹⁵⁶ and that it report to Parliament and the public by 31 March 2005 that this is completed.¹⁵⁷**

¹⁵⁶ Please see Appendix D, Dr. Plummer's disease chart, which presents greater detail on micro-organisms and disease.

¹⁵⁷ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 13. See recommendation #1.

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDATIONS (2006 – 2008)**

**Toward a Standardized
National Health Incident Management System**

In response to the Committee’s recommendation, Health Canada responded in August 2006:

“Health Canada (through [Public Health Agency of Canada] PHAC) is developing its response capacity to deal with known and emerging infectious disease outbreaks. These diseases may occur either naturally or as a result of a malicious release of a biologic agent. PHAC has created specific response plans for smallpox and pandemic influenza, which are flexible enough to enable us to respond to any of the other five diseases on the Category A list, and the diseases on the Category B and C lists of threat agents.

In addition to the development of response plans, PHAC has also developed and implemented a Tier 1 Laboratories¹⁵⁸ (hospital and clinic laboratories), Bioterrorism Recognition Training program. This training program is designed to help laboratory personnel to better recognize biological and viral agents of bioterrorism in a laboratory setting. To date, there are 35 trained instructors who have provided this program to 289 laboratory personnel across Canada. The on-line version of this training program was launched in February 2006.

Table-top exercises for influenza and plague were conducted with international partners and laboratory diagnostic training for smallpox and tularemia, and electron microscopy was provided through the Global Health Security Initiative (GHSI) and its Global Health Security Action Group Laboratory Network (GHSAGLN). Additional international workshops are also scheduled. Furthermore, PHAC is working on the development of a generic emergency response system which would be used to respond to all kinds of health emergencies, including chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) terrorist incidents and new emerging infectious diseases. This generic response system, the National Health Incident Management System (NHIMS), will be supported by more specific contingency plans and/or, as deemed appropriate, by agent specific information sets.

¹⁵⁸ Containment levels (tiers) describe the minimum containment required for handling human pathogens safely in a laboratory setting. For a description of these levels, please see: Public Health Agency of Canada, Containment Facilities. Available at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ols-bsl/containment/index.html>

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PHAC is also collaborating with Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada to develop and implement the National Emergency Response System (NERS). NERS is a generic response framework designed to ensure strategic coordination of federal mandates into a Government of Canada emergency response. NERS is based on the Incident Command System and Health Canada and PHAC are revising their own internal Emergency Response Plan to incorporate this approach and bring it in line with NERS. The development of the National Health Incident Management System is being done in collaboration with the provinces and territories and will incorporate the principles of the Incident Command System and be complementary to NERS. This new concept of operations will greatly enhance the health community's capacity to coordinate, communicate and manage during health emergencies, through the development of a comprehensive health emergency management policy and an integrated operational structure which will promote inter-operability and connectedness of jurisdictional systems during a health emergency.

In addition, other initiatives are being pursued with the provinces and territories to improve emergency health and terrorism response capacity. These include the development of Health Emergency Response Teams, through the National Office for Health Emergency Response Teams, as well as Epidemiologic Emergency Response Teams. Work also continues on a federal/provincial/territorial agreement on mutual aid during a disaster or public health emergency, which is being overseen by the Pan-Canadian Public Health Network. As an interim measure, the Checklist of Best Practices to Facilitate the Sharing of Mutual Aid Among Provincial/Territorial and Federal Governments During a Disaster or Public Health Emergency has been developed to ensure jurisdictions have a working tool in place in the event of an emergency.

From a national perspective, ensuring that authorities at all levels of government have a complementary framework for dealing with health emergencies is a key preparedness objective. This is essential to ensure an effective response, and pivotal to public confidence and international credibility. The development of the National Framework for Health Emergency Management has provided federal, provincial and territorial governments with common guidelines for program development in health emergency management.”¹⁵⁹

Library of Parliament Researchers¹⁶⁰ asked the Public Health Agency of Canada: How do the response plans for smallpox and pandemic influenza function in relation to the NHIMS? The Agency replied:

“Once the NHIMS is operational, it will serve to complement the existing disease specific contingency plans such as smallpox and pandemic influenza.

¹⁵⁹ Health Canada, “Response to Committee Recommendations,” August 2006, pg 1-2.

¹⁶⁰ See footnote #35.

The NHIMS is an all-hazards system designed to enhance coordination across jurisdictions during all types of emergencies. The NHIMS is based on a flexible, scalable response structure which provides a common framework for communication, planning and decision-making for both natural and human-induced emergencies/disasters including infectious disease outbreaks like smallpox and pandemic influenza. Although specific contingency plans may call for specific actions to manage a particular emergency such as smallpox, the response structure and protocols for coordinating the response across organizations and jurisdictions (NHIMS) remains the same.”¹⁶¹

Library of Parliament researchers¹⁶² further asked: What is the status of the NHIMS? When will it be complete? They responded:

“Currently, the National Health Incident Management System (NHIMS) is a conceptual framework that is being operationalized through the Public Health Agency of Canada and the provincial/territorial governments.

NHIMS is intended to enhance coordination, communication and decision-making between jurisdictions during emergencies, taking into account potential differences in jurisdictional health and emergency management systems. Both federal and provincial/territorial jurisdictions are now adopting the incident management system to ensure a standardized, all hazards response capacity by which organizations can effectively coordinate. Federal and provincial/territorial jurisdictions are also participating in the development of standards for emergency management, as well as collaborative training courses which will further strengthen consistency in planning, response, and recovery protocols. Documents defining Canada’s national health emergency management system and the National Health Incident Management System are expected to be completed in the spring of 2008.”¹⁶³

Conceptual framework? Four years after the Committee pointed out this huge weakness in Canada’s emergency response capacity, and five years after the SARS outbreak in Toronto, Canada’s management system for health emergencies remained a concept – still no working agreement between the federal government, the provinces and the territories.

¹⁶¹ Public Health Agency of Canada, “PHAC response to SCONSAD follow up questions,” October 30, 2007, pg. 1-2.

¹⁶² See footnote #35.

¹⁶³ Public Health Agency of Canada, “PHAC response to SCONSAD follow up questions,” October 30, 2007, pg. 1.

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The documents defining the system, as noted above, were due “in the spring of 2008.” We watch and wait, but nothing has emerged from the cave. A new approach to hibernation, perhaps.

Public Safety Canada’s National Emergency Response System

On September 19, 2007, Library of Parliament researchers¹⁶⁴ asked Public Safety Canada to describe the functioning of the National Emergency Response System (NERS). The Department replied on February 26, 2008:

“The purpose of the NERS is to provide for the requisite linkages among the federal, provincial, and territorial emergency response management systems when a request for assistance has been submitted by a province or territory. Seven activities common to all F/P/T [Federal-Provincial-Territorial] emergency response management systems will be applied as the basis for supporting an integrated response. The seven common activities include: situational awareness, risk assessment, planning, logistics, public communications, liaison and, finance and administration.

The linkages and interfaces between the Federal government and each of the provinces and territories systems will be the critical aspect that enables the National Emergency Response System to function effectively. These linkages and interfaces will be done through the positioning of the Public Safety Regional Director as the key federal liaison with provincial or territorial officials, regional federal departments and through effective communication between the Government Operations Centre and the Provincial/Territorial Emergency Operations Centres.

It was developed over several years based on joint FPT emergency response activities and operational experience, including most recently the federal and provincial response to potential floods in British Columbia.

NERS was presented to Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management (SOREM) in November 2007 for review and approved as an interim document to be validated by exercises beginning in 2008.

NERS will be updated as required to remain consistent with evolving and changing federal, provincial and territorial emergency management priorities and operations.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ See footnote #5.

We asked: When is NERS slated to be completed, and has it been tested yet?
The Department replied:

“The National Emergency Response System (NERS) described in the NERS document provides for the requisite linkages among the federal, provincial, and territorial emergency response management systems and formalizes what has been in practice in the last two years.

The NERS document was drafted by the FPT Response Working Group under the direction of the Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management (SOREM) to implement Ministers’ direction for greater coordination between federal, provincial and territorial response operations.

NERS was presented to SOREM in November 2007 for review and approved as an interim document to be validated by exercises beginning in 2008. It is slated for approval by Ministers in January 2009.

NERS will be updated as required to remain consistent with evolving and changing federal, provincial and territorial emergency management priorities and operations.”¹⁶⁶

In late June, 2008 – the week before this report went into its final draft – we asked the Department whether the 2008 exercises designed to validate the approved NERS interim document had commenced. They have. Public Safety Canada told us NERS is being exercised daily through events in real time, including during the recent floods in New Brunswick.¹⁶⁷ However, NERS is still an interim document, not scheduled for approval by ministers until January 2009. The Committee will watch this date.

Library of Parliament researchers¹⁶⁸ also asked the Public Health Agency of Canada: What is the status of NERS? When will it be complete, and how will NERS interact with NHIMS? Who will have authority? PHAC replied:

“The NERS has recently been renamed FERP (Federal Emergency Response Plan). It integrates federal, regional, provincial, non-government organizations

¹⁶⁵ Public Safety Canada, “Follow UP Questions for Public Safety Canada regarding: ‘Recommendations and PSEPC/Portfolio Responses to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence (SCONSAD)’ (August 30, 2006),” February 26, 2008, pg 11.

¹⁶⁶ Public Safety Canada, “Follow UP Questions for Public Safety Canada regarding: ‘Recommendations and PSEPC/Portfolio Responses to the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence (SCONSAD)’ (August 30, 2006),” February 26, 2008, pg 11-12.

¹⁶⁷ Email correspondence with Public Safety Canada, June 23, 2008.

¹⁶⁸ See footnote #35.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN CANADA

and private sector efforts into a comprehensive federal approach to emergency response. The FERP is managed by Public Safety Canada. It is currently in the approval process.

The FERP (formerly NERS) was developed to provide a common structure to be used by the Government of Canada to coordinate federal response to events of national importance, including support to provinces and territories and other federal departments and agencies.

The NHIMS constitutes the emergency response system across federal/provincial/territorial jurisdictions within the health sector, and is closely aligned to FERP through internal jurisdictional mechanisms at both the federal and provincial/territorial levels. Both FERP and NHIMS are based on common incident management standards and protocols, thereby ensuring standardization and inter-operability of operational protocols.”¹⁶⁹

The reader will note that in the answers above, it is unclear “who has the authority”? NERS or NHIMS?” We still do not know.

NOTE TO CONFUSED READERS: The National Emergency Response System (NERS) was re-named Federal Emergency Response Plan (FERP), and then, as per Public Safety’s 2008 documents, changed back to NERS. This report will refer to it as ‘NERS’ to maintain consistency.

Cooperation between Provinces

The Public Health Agency of Canada was also asked: When will this FPT agreement on mutual aid mentioned above be complete? What work has been done on this agreement so far? The reply:

“The Federal/Provincial/Territorial Memorandum of Understanding on the Provision of Mutual Aid During a Public Health Emergency (MOU) has been completed and approved by both the Pan-Canadian Public Health Network and the Conference of Deputy Ministers of Health. The MOU is waiting for final approval by the F/P/T Ministers of Health, at which time it will become a formal mutual aid agreement between provinces and territories.”¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Public Health Agency of Canada, “PHAC response to SCONSAD follow up questions,” October 30, 2007, pg. 2.

¹⁷⁰ Public Health Agency of Canada, “PHAC response to SCONSAD follow up questions,” October 30, 2007, pg. 3.

That the provinces and federal government have signed an MOU for helping each other out during health crises is a step in the right direction in health emergency management. A small step – but any step that doesn't involve a treadmill has to be regarded as a triumph in context of Canadian emergency response capacity.

CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT

We apologise for putting the reader through the last few pages, but it was necessary to demonstrate what we deal with when we try getting answers to important questions about emergency management.

National Health Emergency
Ad Hockery

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) wrote to the Committee: “documents defining Canada’s national health emergency management system and the National Health Incident Management System are expected to be completed in the spring of 2008.” So far the Committee has not seen documentation or any announcements related to the proposed National Health Incident Management System (NHIMS).

In addition, after an overview of PHAC’s (and Health Canada’s) Departmental Performance Report as well as their Report on Plans and Priorities for the last 10 years, the Committee can find no evidence that the National Health Incident Management System (NHIMS) is a priority for either Health Canada or the Public Health Agency of Canada.¹⁷¹ We can assume that the NHIMS is another example of a failed attempt to systematically respond to health crises across Canada. Given the severity of the SARs incident in Ontario in 2004, the Committee is disturbed that PHAC and Health Canada have not done more on this.

¹⁷¹ The NHIMS was mentioned once in PHAC’s 2006-2007 *Departmental Performance Report*.

The Auditor General Agrees

Anyone wondering whether the Committee is over-dramatizing this situation should turn to the Auditor General’s Report of May 6, 2008. Chapter 5 of that report is titled Surveillance of Infectious Diseases—Public Health Agency of Canada.¹⁷² The report lists of litany of what it calls “long-standing weaknesses” in the federal government’s ability to obtain and report surveillance information on the incidence and threat of infectious diseases in Canada. Many of these weaknesses were first pointed out by the Auditor-General’s office in 1999 – a decade ago – and still have not been fixed.

Here is a brief synopsis of the failings that the Auditor General found in the Public Health Agency of Canada’s capacity to gather and make use of information documenting cases of infectious diseases and to raise the alarm in the face of potential threats to public health raised by such cases.

The Auditor General’s report found that:

- 1. The Agency has investigated some public health threats but “has not used these public health threat assessment results, or another consistently applied risk assessment, to set its objectives and priorities.”**
- 2. The Agency has supported a project to gather information on trends and predicted conditions which found that adjustments would have to be made based on new ways of researching and responding to infectious diseases, but that again the Agency “has not used the results of this exercise to set long-term objectives and priorities . . . ”**
- 3. The Agency responded to the Auditor-General’s 2002 complaint that the Agency had not identified its surveillance priorities by setting up a working group five years later to**

¹⁷² Auditor General of Canada, “Chapter 5—Surveillance of Infectious Diseases—Public Health Agency of Canada”, *2008 May Report of the Auditor General of Canada*, May 6, 2008. Available at http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/aud_ch_oag_200805_05_e_30701.html.

develop a strategic approach to priorities, but by November, 2007 that group had only produced “a plan for working toward a surveillance strategy.”

4. The Agency still does not have “clear and up-to-date legislative authorities for its surveillance activities, either for data collection or when it needs to respond to emergency situations.”

5. The Agency and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency have not done an integrated risk assessment to determine what the risks are of diseases caused by pathogens that pass from animals to humans (which account for an estimated 65-80 percent of newly-identified human diseases).

6. The Agency relies on the provinces and territories to voluntarily send useful and complete data on surveillance of infectious diseases, but that this data is sometimes not forthcoming, or incomplete.

7. The Agency has not been able to reach agreement with the provinces and territories on a set of surveillance standards that would insure that “infectious disease occurrences are defined, reported and recorded uniformly across the country.”

8. The Agency has conducted three pilot projects to determine whether the quality of data that it is receiving is adequate to support public health actions, that one of them showed that less than half of the data received met applicable standards, but that necessary procedures for assessing and documenting data quality had not yet been put in place.

9. The Agency has yet to develop and implement a comprehensive approach and method for consistently measuring the Agency’s systems to determine whether they accomplish what they are supposed to accomplish – one of the weaknesses the Auditor General first documented in 1999, nearly a decade ago.

10. The Agency has not demonstrated that its reports and analyses are meeting the needs of public health officials in Canada and other users – “with the exception of E. Coli, we found that the Agency has not determined how well its reports and analyses supplied the information required for anticipating, preventing, and responding to public health threats.”

There is more, and the Auditor General makes a series of recommendations to rectify the many failings of this Agency to date. But at one point the report simply pauses and laments:

“We are concerned that a nationally standardized approach to disease reporting remains years away.”

National Emergency Response System: Theory or Reality?

In the “Government Response” section of Problem 9 of this report, “First Responders Ignored,” Public Safety Canada wrote: “a core principle of the National Emergency Response System (NERS) is concurrent jurisdictional response, which acknowledges that emergency response can require action from all orders of government, and that these parties have different areas of responsibility.”

Knowing this, Public Safety Canada began designing an all-encompassing system that they called the National Emergency Response System (NERS) which “integrates federal, regional, provincial, non-government organizations and private sector efforts into a comprehensive federal approach to emergency response.” What a concept! And since this system is in the approval process, we can all rest at ease... or can we?

Is NERS a reality or is it just a concept? The Department’s official documents point to the National Emergency Response System (NERS) being “in development” for the last 4 years.

There is no evidence that it has made the metamorphosis from concept to workable system.

No wonder the Auditor General believes that a nationally standardized system of infectious disease reporting is years away.

The following box gives the reader a concise history of what has not happened with NERS since its inception.

The Sorry History of Public Safety Canada's National Emergency Response System (NERS)

Public Safety Canada, *Report on Plans and Priorities 2004-2005* - "...finalize the development and implementation of NERS..."

Public Safety Canada - Report on Plans and Priorities 2005-2006 – "Continued phased implementation and training of the National Emergency Response System" – by summer 2006

Public Safety Canada, *Departmental Performance Report 2005-2006* – Focus of NERS was on the Federal Emergency Response Plan (FERP). FERP is described as an "umbrella plan" for other federal plans and will align with federal coordination structures.

Public Safety Canada - Report on Plans and Priorities 2006-2007- "PSEPC is leading the development of a new national emergency response framework, the National Emergency Response System (NERS)."

Public Safety Canada - Report on Plans and Priorities 2007-2008 – "The Department will implement FERP, the federal government's all-hazards approach to emergency response... FERP [will be] implemented by March 2008."

Public Safety Canada - Report on Plans and Priorities 2008-2009 – "...through the National Emergency Response System (NERS), the Department will develop a common model for emergency response among Canada's varied jurisdictional authorities."¹⁷³

¹⁷³ Public Safety Canada's *Report on Plans and Priorities* (RPP) and its *Departmental Performance Reports* (DPR) may be found at the Treasury Board at: <http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/est-pre/estimE.asp>

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When the Committee checked the Public Safety Canada website in April 2008, there was no mention of the status of the Federal Emergency Response Plan (FERP). As the above chronology indicates, the implementation date for FERP was supposed to be March 2008.

In 2005, the Auditor General released a report on emergency preparedness in Canada, in which the early development of NERS was examined. From the very beginning, the Auditor General pointed out the vagueness and lack of clarity in Public Safety Canada’s leadership in spearheading the federal government’s emergency response. The report stated:

We found that departmental plans are vague on how they would link together to form a co-ordinated federal response. Section 7 of the *Emergency Preparedness Act* requires that departments prepare emergency response plans for areas within their mandates. We noted a potential, as emergencies develop and implicate more departments and agencies, for conflict between having to work together with other departments and supporting the line responsibilities of their own mandates.¹⁷⁴

As a result, the Auditor General’s report recommended to Public Safety Canada:

2.96 Recommendation. Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada should work with the other federal agencies to clarify the command and control structure governing the federal response to emergencies.

Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada’s response. Leadership will be exercised through the command and control structure of the National Emergency Response System (NERS). In addition, changes to the *Emergency Preparedness Act* will reinforce the authority of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness to co-ordinate the actions of all federal players in emergencies of national significance.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Auditor General of Canada, “Chapter 2—National Security in Canada—The 2001 Anti-Terrorism Initiative—Air Transportation Security, Marine Security, and Emergency Preparedness”, April 2005, Available at http://209.71.218.213/internet/English/aud_ch_oag_200504_2_e_14933.html

¹⁷⁵ Auditor General of Canada, “Chapter 2—National Security in Canada—The 2001 Anti-Terrorism Initiative—Air Transportation Security, Marine Security, and Emergency Preparedness”, April 2005, Available at http://209.71.218.213/internet/English/aud_ch_oag_200504_2_e_14933.html

As we noted in Problem 1, “Lack of Emergency Management,” the Emergency Management Act received royal assent on June 22nd, 2007.¹⁷⁶ The new act modifies the previous Emergency Preparedness Act and gives the Minister of Public Safety broad powers to direct emergency preparedness efforts across federal departments – so what’s the problem now? With the Emergency Management Act in place, the Minister of Public Safety has the authority to establish federal government-wide emergency management policies and programs, yet, when it comes to the National Emergency Response System (NERS), nothing concrete has happened, other than planning and developing.

So, the Committee asks the Department of Public Safety: is the National Emergency Response System (NERS) a theory or a reality?

After reviewing their departmental responses and documents, and after reviewing the auditor general’s reports we believe the reader will come to the same conclusion as the Committee – that the department is still unable to answer this question.

A national emergency response system – which outlines jurisdictional responsibility – is a necessity for our nation to respond to large scale disasters.

¹⁷⁶ Emergency Management Act, First Session, Thirty-ninth Parliament, 55-56 Elizabeth II, 2006-2007. For a text of the Act, please see <http://www2.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?pub=bill&doc=C-12&parl=39&ses=1&language=E>

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that:

- 1. Public Safety Canada complete and release the National Emergency Response System (NERS) not later than March 2009.**
- 2. The Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada publicly release the National Health Incident Management System (NHIMS) not later than March 2009.**
- 3. The Public Health Agency of Canada treat the 2008 Auditor General's report with the highest priority and that the agency report to Parliament as each recommendation is implemented. (For full list of the Auditor General's 2008 recommendations, see Appendix C).**
- 4. The Auditor General conduct a follow-up to the 2005 audit of emergency preparedness, and in particular, examine and assess the status of NERS.**

Problem 12(a): Emergency Preparedness and Canada's Police

In recent years the Committee has repeatedly made the case for dramatically increasing the number of police in Canada. Here are some results from a report on the RCMP in British Columbia by the Institute for Canadian Urban Research Studies and the University College of the Fraser Valley:¹⁷⁷

- The population of Canada more than doubled (2.3 times) between 1962 and 2003 while the number of police increased by only 1.7 times, even as the number of crimes being reported to police increased seven-fold.
- On average, each British Columbia police officer was expected to handle almost three times as many crimes in 2005 as in 1962.
- Break and enter cases, drunk driving cases, and domestic assault all take much longer for police officers to process, restricting the time available for front line duties (details to follow).

Here are a few facts the Committee has learned from witnesses:

- The RCMP only have the resources to keep tabs on one-third of the organized crime organizations in Canada that *it knows exist*.
- To effectively police Canada's ports – which are riddled with corruption and vulnerable to terrorist attack – the RCMP would need another 900 officers.
- The U.S. Coast Guard polices the Great Lakes with 2,200 officers. Canada tries to do it with 14 Mounties.

¹⁷⁷ A 30 Year Analysis of Police Service Delivery and Costing: "E" Division: Research Summary, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University College of the Fraser Valley and the Institute for Canadian Urban Research (2005). Note: "E" Division is the British Columbia RCMP office.

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There is an obvious solution here: increase RCMP staff and funding. Our committee estimates that Canada needs an additional 5,000-7,000 Mounties.

The Prime Minister promised 1,000 additional Mounties in Budget 2006.¹⁷⁸ The force ended up getting 600 or so, but they went to fill vacant positions for a net increase of zero. The other 400 people hired were quietly absorbed into the federal law enforcement bureaucracy.

The Prime Minister does not seem to be particularly interested in restoring the capacity and pride of Canada's national police force, but he has committed himself to increasing the number of police in Canada by 2,500 over five years by funneling money through the provinces. Whether this implies a commitment to maintaining an increase in police funding after the five years are up, however, remains a moot point.

In the RCMP and in Canada's policing organizations across the country the central problem boils down to numbers, or lack of. There are simply not enough police officers in Canada to play a pivotal role in emergencies.

¹⁷⁸ Government of Canada, Budget 2006, <http://www.fin.gc.ca/budtoce/2006/budliste.htm>

Problem 12(b): Policing During Emergencies

While our 2004 report *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines* looked at agreements between different provinces in deploying police, the Committee did not explicitly look at the role of policing as a crucial component in emergency management itself.

Allow us to address the issue now.

The Role of Police

Michael Boyd, Police Chief of the Edmonton Police Service succinctly described the role of the police in our society in his testimony before the Committee in February 2008:

Chief Boyd: Policing has a four-part mandate: crime prevention, maintenance of social order, enforcement of our laws and enhancing and addressing matters of public safety.¹⁷⁹

Canadian police officers are front-line first responders whenever there is a human-induced or natural disaster in Canada. Policing is a cornerstone of successful emergency management. It is the police who are responsible for ensuring that civil order is maintained during emergencies, and that laws are still obeyed.

At no time is law and order more important than during emergencies. This is when the surge capacity of the nation's police forces is tested. Unfortunately, Canada simply does not have the number of police in place to offer significant surge capacity over any length of time.

During the 2004 SARS outbreak, police forces were responsible for stopping the spread of the virus by enforcing quarantine orders. Julian Fantino, now Commissioner of the Ontario Provincial Police but then Toronto's Chief of Police, told the Committee how difficult that turned out to be:

¹⁷⁹ Michael Boyd, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 25, 2008. Issue 5, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

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Senator Moore: Let us talk about the SARS situation. When that epidemic broke, did some medical officer come to Chief Fantino and say, ‘This is what we have. Your people cannot be exposed to this. You have to take these precautions.’ How does that happen? How do you know how far you can go near a situation without endangering your people? Does someone tell you what you facing and what you have to wear? Does that coordination happen? Did it happen in the SARS situation?

Julian Fantino, Commissioner, Ontario Provincial Police: It happened piecemeal. First of all, we did not know what we were facing. Chief Boyd was intimately involved as well, but when that first happened, I did not think for one moment that we, the police, were going to be impacted in any significant way at all. It was a health issue and that was how we saw it at the outset. Very quickly, it became a police issue because there were then quarantine orders that people were not obeying. Who enforces the quarantine orders? There was also the issue of kinds of equipment needed, keeping your people informed so as they will come to work and will continue doing their work. Then there were restrictions placed on hospital visits. People, of course, who had their loved ones in palliative care and in the last days of their lives were not about to be told they could not go and visit their loved ones in the hospital. Therefore, we had to put police officers at the hospitals, as well.

Very quickly it became a huge problem for us. Then the thing that struck us significantly was when the source was identified at one local hospital and the 10-day quarantine was called. We had to identify every police officer that had contact with that hospital during whatever periods of time, and they had to be quarantined at home. Therefore, suddenly we were short 100 and some odd people basically on the turn of a dime.¹⁸⁰

A successful cycle of response, management and recovery in any emergency situation is directly linked to the capability of police forces to play a central role in the process.

Challenges Facing Police Today

More With Less

The Committee has long voiced concern with the paucity of policing in Canada. Canada ranks 19th out of 23 members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in terms of police per

¹⁸⁰ Julian Fantino, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 25, 2008. Issue 5, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

capita (2002 numbers).¹⁸¹ Canada has 186 police per 100,000 citizens; England/Wales has 210; Australia 304; the United States 326. In other words, Canada's ratio of police-to-population is 43 percent lower than the United States, 39 percent lower than Australia's, and 11 per cent lower than England and Wales.¹⁸²

To police at the level of England and Wales, Canada would need another 7,992 police officers. To police at Australia's level, Canada would require an additional 39,000 police officers. The Committee would be satisfied with England's level.

***The Rights of the Accused
Bring Increased Paperwork***

Police work in Canada is changing. There are increasing demands. While the population of Canada more than doubled (2.3 times) between 1962 and 2003, the number of police increased only 1.7 times. During that period the number of crimes reported to police increased seven-fold. Because of increasingly onerous legislative requirements, police require much more time to prepare cases now than they used to.

A 30 year analysis of the RCMP's "E" Division in British Columbia found that break and enter cases require 5 to 10 police hours today compared to one hour in 1970. Drunk driving cases consume an average of five hours compared to one hour in 1970. Domestic assault cases take 10 to 12 hours compared to one hour in 1970.¹⁸³

<p>Governments are providing Canadians with fewer police, on a per-capita basis, to do more complicated work in combating increasingly sophisticated variations of crime.</p>

¹⁸¹ 30 countries are members of the OECD, however, there are only policing numbers available for 23 countries. Most recent figures available are 2002. The Eighth United Nations Survey on Crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems (2001 - 2002), <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/Eighth-United-Nations-Survey-on-Crime-Trends-and-the-Operations-of-Criminal-Justice-Systems.html>

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ *A 30 Year Analysis of Police Service Delivery and Costing: "E" Division: Research Summary*, School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University College of the Fraser Valley and the Institute for Canadian Urban Research (2005).

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If our police are over-stretched on a daily basis, we can't expect to get the kind of surge capacity that may be needed from them during emergencies.

Senator Tkachuk: A DUI [Driving Under Influence] takes 250 per cent more time. Why is that?

Mr. Zaccardelli (former Commissioner of the RCMP): That is because of what the police officer is required to do to comply with the various court decisions and policies in place to respect the Charter rights. We do not question that compliance; however, those decisions have a direct bearing upon us...Something that took a week ten years ago takes months now. You have to realize that officers are up to their ears in paperwork... Consider that over the last 10 years the average time it took to process a break and enter investigation increased by 58 per cent; an impaired driving charge increased 250 per cent; a domestic assault increased 964 per cent. No corresponding budget increases were given to the police every time a court decision or a new piece of legislation increased the processing time. All of this took place in a policing environment of more public oversight, more media scrutiny and more public expectations for an accountability bar set higher than any other profession.¹⁸⁴

The Government, in *Budget 2008*¹⁸⁵, promised to provide funding for 2,500 new police officers across Canada through a \$400 million Police Officers Recruitment Fund over five years, but there has not been an announcement about how this funding will be allotted, or about what guarantee there is that it will be sustained beyond five years. Will the investment be \$80 million a year, each year, for five years, or will there be a low ramp-up and a lot of spending at the end, which is not unusual with these vague announcements. We simply don't know.

Will communities receiving money for additional police officers through the Fund have to match this funding? If so, this could present difficulties for smaller or financially strained communities. Any new funding is welcome, but specifics would be appreciated.

Roles Unclear During Emergencies

The roles federal, provincial and municipal police play during emergencies are not always clear, particularly if terrorism is involved. In the Committee's 2007 survey, we found that although 61 percent of the municipalities listed

¹⁸⁴ Mr. Zaccardelli, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 25, 2008. Issue 5, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

¹⁸⁵ Government of Canada, Budget 2008, <http://www.budget.gc.ca/2008/home-accueil-eng.asp>

“a disaster or state of local emergency caused by an act of terrorism” as a concern for their community, only 36 percent had a counter-terrorism response plan in place.

Some emergency managers, like Kelly Gilday, Deputy Emergency Program Coordinator for the City of Prince George, said that in cases of terrorism the federal police would handle the emergency: “The RCMP do have a terrorism plan, the city does not.” But other municipal managers, such as Larry Brassard, Fire Chief of the Town of Milton, pointed to municipal police as first responders. “...initial response is primarily a police function in so far as ‘counter-terrorism’ is concerned, and policing services are delivered on a regional basis.”

Clearly, the federal police force, the RCMP, are responsible for national security. The *Security Offences Act* designates “primary responsibility” to RCMP peace officers when any alleged offence arises from conduct constituting a threat to the security of Canada.¹⁸⁶ However, in practical terms, local police are likely to be involved. A municipal police officer would probably arrive first at any crime scene, whether it involves national security or not.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities, in their 2008 report *Towards Equity and Efficiency in Policing*, called for clearer lines of responsibility:

As first responders, municipal governments are often left to enforce laws and provide services—border control, interdiction and enforcement on the Great Lakes, or combating cyber crime, for example—that fall squarely within federal jurisdiction. Federal compensation for such services is ad hoc and lacks a consistent practice governed by a set of transparent policies and procedures.

... Police roles, responsibilities and resources have to be aligned and clarified so that each order of government is better able to perform those duties mandated within its jurisdiction. This is particularly true with respect to organized crime, drug-related operations, national security (including surveillance of possible terrorist targets), forensic identification, cyber crime, and border and port security, all areas in which municipalities appear to be underwriting federal policing costs.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ See section 6(1) for the role of the RCMP regarding security offences. *Security Offences Act*, Department of Justice. Available at <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/showdoc/cs/S-7/se:6/en>

¹⁸⁷ Federation of Canadian Municipalities, *Towards Equity and Efficiency in Policing*, May 29, 2008. Available at <http://www.fcm.ca/English/View.asp?mp=1&x=878>

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For policing to function well during complex natural or human induced disasters, there must be a clearly-articulated delineation of responsibility that assigns command and control and lays out the interlocking responsibilities of each force likely to be involved.

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **The Committee recommends that the representatives of the federal, provincial and local police forces across Canada conduct national discussions in order to further clarify roles and responsibilities with regard to national security and emergency management.**
- **The Committee recommends that there be an increase in the number of police officers to reach England's level – approximately 8,000 more police, consistent with what the Committee has been proposing with regard to the RCMP (5,000 to 7,000 additional members), and with the Government's commitment to an additional 2500 police officers.**

Problem 12(c):

The State of the Mounties Today

The RCMP is unlike any other national police force in the world. It is involved in all aspects of policing in Canada, from helping to maintain the integrity of Canada's border, to national security investigations, to manning isolated and northern posts, to mentoring foreign police forces, to policing provincial, territorial, municipal and First Nations communities.

It is the constitutional obligation of the Government of Canada to provide its citizens with peace, order and good government, and the RCMP have played a proud role in delivering the first two components since 1874. But the RCMP have had increasing difficulty in recent years in maintaining that proud tradition.

It has become obvious that the RCMP face many challenges – some of their own making, some imposed upon them by outside forces. The RCMP's problems, unfortunately, become the problems of every Canadian community that they police – especially during emergencies.

Contract Policing Essential

Contract police services for the provinces, territories and municipalities absorb nearly half (approximately 47 percent) of the RCMP's uniformed personnel. Through contract policing, the RCMP perform a variety of functions involved in delivering police services at 652 locations in 10 provinces and 3 territories.¹⁸⁸ In these communities, as the provincial, territorial or municipal police, the RCMP assume the role of the local front line first responder, playing a lead role in emergency management through conducting search and rescue operations, responding to floods, etc.

¹⁸⁸ The RCMP provides community policing services under contract in all provinces and territories of Canada, except Ontario and Quebec. The structure of the RCMP in these two provinces is significantly different from the rest of Canada. See RCMP, Community, Contract and Aboriginal Policing, http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ccaps/contract_e.htm

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There have been arguments that the RCMP should get out of contract policing, but the Committee believes that would be counterproductive for the Force itself and for Canadians in general. Contract policing is where young officers come face to face with Canadians and learn to understand the human element that is so important to policing. Contract policing provides – or should provide – the personnel that can be called upon in national emergencies and for special situations like summit conferences and the Olympics. A national police force, with the surge capacity for national emergencies, is a critical asset.

David Brown's task force report, *Rebuilding the Trust: Report of the Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP* (referred to hereafter as '*The Brown Report*') published December 2007, pointed out that RCMP leadership caused some of the force's problems by adhering to outdated management practices, and called for better use of their human resources.¹⁸⁹

However, *The Brown Report* criticized the federal government for limiting RCMP management by placing structural and financial decisions in the hands of Treasury Board and Public Works and Government Services Canada, rather than giving the RCMP the status of Separate Employer, like the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. In his testimony before the Committee in February 2008, former RCMP Commissioner Zaccardelli described what separate employer status would mean:

Mr. Zaccardelli (former Commissioner of the RCMP): There are two important issues when talking about separate employer status: the ability to control your own finances and the flexibility that comes with that ability; and the ability to have your own [human resource] policies to give you the flexibility, given the unique nature of your organization.¹⁹⁰

In the case of the RCMP, decisions on how the organization should manage itself lie in the hands of Treasury Board (for personnel policies and funding approval) and Public Works and Government Services Canada (for acquisitions). The requirement that the RCMP work through these two

¹⁸⁹ *Rebuilding the Trust: Report of the Task Force on Governance and Cultural Change in the RCMP*, Submitted to the Minister of Public Safety and President of the Treasury Board, (December 14, 2007), <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/rcmp-grc/report-rapport-eng.aspx>

¹⁹⁰ Mr. Zaccardelli, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 25, 2008. Issue 5, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session.

government departments significantly complicates management of the Force. This is something the Committee would like to see changed.

Understaffing

The Brown Report depicted an RCMP that is greatly understaffed. Unfortunately, it neglected to advise the government to do the obvious: increase staff and funding.

The Prime Minister promised 1,000 additional Mounties and federal prosecutors in Budget 2006.¹⁹¹ The Force ended up getting about 600 new officers, while the other 400 became civilian support staff.¹⁹² In reality, most or all of the new officers simply filled already vacant positions, which still left the RCMP well below their authorized strength.

Our Committee has done the math based on findings from our previous reports¹⁹³ and we believe that that Canada needs an additional 5,000-7,000 Mounties (see chart in the Appendix E to this report).

We need more Mounties in normal times, and we certainly need them available in times of emergency.

¹⁹¹ Government of Canada, Budget 2006, <http://www.fin.gc.ca/budtoce/2006/budliste.htm>

¹⁹² Office of the Prime Minister, Media Centre, <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=1298>

¹⁹³ See Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *Canadian Security Guidebook 2007: Coasts, Border Crossings, Airports and Seaports*, all available at: http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/Committee_SenRep.asp?Language=E&Parl=39&Ses=2&comm_id=76

Staffing Challenges Facing the RCMP as Outlined in the *The Brown Report*:

Cadets Paid Little – *The Brown Report* criticized the RCMP for not paying cadets for their 24 weeks training at Depot.¹⁹⁴ Ontario Provincial Police cadets are paid \$32,436,¹⁹⁵ and Ottawa Police trainees are paid \$39,000 annually. However, in June 2008 the government announced that they will begin paying RCMP cadets \$500 per week for training at Depot.¹⁹⁶ Adjusted to annual rates, this is the equivalent of \$26,000 a year – nearly a third less than that of the OPP or Ottawa police. It could be argued that this is fair given that Mounties are provided room and board during training. But trainees with families living elsewhere still have to bear the burden of supporting them, and that can't be easy on these skimpy stipends.

Northern Posts: The RCMP does contract policing in isolated and northern communities such as Hudson Bay or Reindeer Lake, Saskatchewan. *The Brown Report* stressed the importance of ensuring that those serving in those isolated communities are paid fair allowances. As well, most Northern Posts are seriously understaffed.¹⁹⁷

Unpaid 'Voluntary' Overtime: In many remote communities, RCMP officers are never really 'off duty', and they find themselves doing overtime out of necessity. Overworked officers who have spent little time with family are likely to be stressed, fatigued and suffer impaired judgment.¹⁹⁸

New Backup Policy Needs More Officers: A new policy announced on December 19, 2007 requires multiple member responses to calls involving weapons, violence, or in remote areas not accessible by communications.¹⁹⁹ Unless there are more personnel, this policy will simply add responsibility to already overworked officers.

Changing Demographics and Mentors: There aren't enough RCMP mentors for cadets in the field. This is partly due to the changing demographics of the force, but also due to the limitations on officers due to understaffing.²⁰⁰

RCMP Officers are mired in Administration: The administrative burden imposed on regular members of the RCMP, including legal developments and technological changes, has seriously restricted the time available for front-line police work.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁴ *Rebuilding the Trust (Brown Report)*, pg. 36

¹⁹⁵ Ontario Provincial Police, O.P.P. Benefits and Pay, http://www.opp.ca/Recruitment/opp_000582.html

¹⁹⁶ Office of the Prime Minister, Media Centre, <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/media.asp?id=2168>

¹⁹⁷ *Rebuilding the Trust (Brown Report)*, pg. 24-25.

¹⁹⁸ *Rebuilding the Trust (Brown Report)*, pg. 26-27.

¹⁹⁹ RCMP, Statement from D/Commr Sweeney on RCMP Backup Policy: "In adopting a national backup policy, there will be resource implications. We could see the redeployment of existing resources as well as more rigorous residency requirements." http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/news/2007/2007_12_05_backup_e.htm

²⁰⁰ *Rebuilding the Trust (Brown Report)*, pg. 27.

²⁰¹ *Rebuilding the Trust (Brown Report)*, pg. 25.

These shortfalls show what Canada's Mounties are up against. For more fulsome details, *The Brown Report* is well worth reading in its entirety.

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee recommends that:

- 1. The Government grant the RCMP separate employer status.**
- 2. The Government fund annual increases to the RCMP budget to permit a growth of at least 700 personnel per year for each of the next 10 years.**
- 3. The RCMP provide a schedule of implementation for each of the recommendations in *The Brown Report*.**
- 4. The RCMP table a quarterly report to Parliament on whatever progress has been made on (a) separate employer status (b) increases in personnel (c) implementation of the various recommendations of *The Brown Report*.**

Conclusion

Anyone who has waded through the huge piles of documentation contained in this report – as well as the Committee’s attached comments and recommendations – will be well aware that members do not believe that Canadian governments have been doing their job in preparing for the kinds of major national emergencies that are bound to confront Canadians in the coming years.

When we say “governments,” we refer to politicians and bureaucrats in all orders of government, federal, provincial and territorial. There must be some government people involved in this file who have been trying exceedingly hard at doing their job. Unfortunately their efforts are getting lost in the quagmire of lethargy that seems to be the hallmark of emergency preparedness in this country. Committee members know that it isn’t easy making progress on any file that crosses jurisdictional lines, particularly when some provinces are openly antagonist about having their jurisdictions invaded no matter how serious the issue.

Nonetheless, we are talking about the possibility of widespread physical and economic disaster to Canadians here, and *somebody* has to cut the Gordian Knot.

In recognition of the fact that the Committee has harped on this theme *ad nauseam*, allow us to quit the scene by focusing on what Canadians themselves can do to ready themselves for difficult, life-threatening situations. The Committee recognizes that it has focused almost entirely on what governments should be doing. In future we will broaden our focus to determine whether the Canadian public might be able to muster more energy and savvy in gearing up to protect themselves, their families and their neighbours.

The Volunteer Component

To date the Committee has focused on how well – or poorly – Canada’s governments have performed in recent years to improve the chances of ordinary Canadians to survive emergency situations. In the coming months

we intend to shift our focus to determine whether those ordinary Canadians are being provided with what they need to help themselves and to help their neighbours.

In most emergencies, experts will tell you that people are usually on their own for the at least the first 24 hours. The message Public Safety Canada is now sending to Canadians is that individuals and families should plan to sustain themselves for the first 72 hours while emergency workers help those in urgent need.²⁰² It usually takes at least that long to get help from other places.

This is when people need to come together to help themselves, and there are plenty of heroic stories of Canadians doing just that.

But are we doing enough in Canada to give volunteers what they need to perform effectively? In the United States, many observers have pointed out that there are worthwhile lessons to be learned by comparing community responses after Hurricane Katrina struck in New Orleans on August 29, 2005, and the community responses to the wildfires that hit the San Diego area in late October, 2007.

It didn't take long for New Orleans flood victims to learn how slow and inadequate outside help would prove to be. In fact, even many civil authorities with emergency responsibilities fled the scene.

The lesson, psychologist Terry Paulson wrote in the *Ventura (California) County Star* [January 7, 2008], was

“Whether disasters come from Mother Nature or a terrorist attack, major disasters occur. Hurricane Katrina dashed all illusions that the cavalry will quickly show up to save the day . . . in an overwhelming disaster, the public must become part of the solution – be a resilient community.”

The contrast in public response to the southern California wildfires could not have been more pronounced. Thousands of volunteers worked tirelessly to support public officials and non-governmental agencies in assisting people

²⁰² See Public Safety Canada's website on personal and family emergency preparedness at www.getprepared.ca

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threatened by the wildfires. That made a huge impression on California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. On February 11, 2008 the lead on a story in the *San Diego Union-Tribune* was this:

SACRAMENTO – Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger was so impressed with the commitment and compassion shown by volunteer Paul Russo and others at the Del Mar Fairgrounds evacuation center during the October firestorms that he has directed aides to initiate plans to help improve emergency assistance programs across the state, using San Diego’s response as inspiration.

The story went on to document not just how Mr. Russo had helped 300 frail and elderly people get to the Fairgrounds after flames forced them out of their nursing home, but how thousands of Californians pitched in through volunteer agencies, and as individuals, to help out.

Later, volunteer agencies pointed out that the government could encourage even more voluntary help if there were an identification system for volunteers (showing they had the skills needed to assist in dangerous situations, and proving them not to be imposters). Voluntary help would be enhanced if there were better insurance programs for volunteer groups so people wouldn’t worry about stepping in to help. Another aid would be having coordination templates in place to assure volunteers are dispatched in a way that ensures they help, rather than hinder.

How would people in the average Canadian community respond? Like they did in New Orleans? Or, like they did in San Diego? What sort of preparations would ensure the average Canadian community could respond confidently, knowing that all Canadians would want to step up to the plate?

Are there measures the federal and provincial governments could take – like those being studied by Gov. Schwarzenegger – to improve Canada’s volunteer capacity? The Committee promises to look into that. From everything the Committee has seen, our confused governments shouldn’t be counted on to confront the multitude of potential disasters that could come down the pipe. An alert and prepared citizenry is going to have to be part of Canada’s capacity to respond.

Listening to the People on the Front Lines

Emergency preparedness is jointly funded by federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments. Funding initiatives such as the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP) are central to the development of municipal programs to prevent and respond to all physical threats faced by communities, be they floods, earthquakes, chemical spills, terrorist attacks, or pandemics.

Municipalities – at least larger municipalities – know that the onus is on them – and probably them alone – to deal with emergencies in the early going. Tom Sampson, Chief of Emergency Medical Services for the City of Calgary, says senior levels of government make no secret of this, but underestimate what that really means:

When we met recently with the federal government around pandemic preparation, their response was, ‘YOYO 24.’ I do not know whether you have heard that one before, but it means: ‘You’re on your own for the first 24 hours.’

We have looked at the federal government preparedness capacity, and we think it is YOYO 7 days. Our concern right now is that the municipal authority must deal with the first five to seven days of any major event, at which time additional assistance will be available.²⁰³

92 Canadian Municipalities Set Out Their Major Emergency Preparedness Grievances

For the second time in four years the Committee connected with municipalities across Canada to find out how they assess their level of emergency preparedness. Committee members also wanted to know whether people on the front lines could point to flaws in the way Canada anticipates and deals with municipal and regional emergencies.

This type of questionnaire was first used for our 2004 report after

²⁰³ Tom Sampson, *Proceedings of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence*, Hearing Transcript, February 1, 2007, Issue 9, 39th Parliament, 1st Session.

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Committee members discovered discrepancies in the kind of testimony we were getting from federal and provincial officials and what we were hearing from municipal officials and first responders themselves. We were getting a strong sense that government systems that might have seemed responsible on paper weren't always working in the field.

In the spring of 2007, the Committee sent questionnaires to officials holding responsibilities for emergency preparedness in 100 Canadian municipalities of all sizes and regions, broadly representing the population of Canada.

We received 92 detailed responses. The overall tone of the responses was mildly encouraging – with emphasis on the word ‘mildly’. Some officials responsible for emergency preparedness did say there had been at least minimal improvements in the way the federal and provincial governments respond to municipal needs in the area of emergency preparedness and support during emergencies.

But there remains a perception that politicians and bureaucrats at the senior levels aren't listening to first responders about what the municipalities feel they need most to cope with emergencies. There are also complaints that the systems in place to provide assistance to the municipalities are cumbersome and under-funded.

While senior levels of government are prepared to tell municipalities that they must put emergency preparedness programs in place, they do not seem prepared to provide the funds needed to keep preparedness programs operational, or to make adjustments to these programs if situations change or flaws are perceived.

If the federal and provincial governments are not going to be on site for one to five days - depending on the nature of the emergency - an important question arises:

Have they put the systems in place – and made the funds available – to minimize the risk that emergencies will turn into disasters?

Is there a coherent national matrix in place offering every Canadian community the opportunity to significantly upgrade its capacity to respond to man-made or natural emergencies?

Many of the responses the Committee received point to two basic areas of weakness standing in the way of such a matrix:

(a) **Inflexible funding systems**

(b) **Inadequate levels of funding**

You KNOW More Emergencies are Headed Toward Us When Half of Canadian Municipalities Say They Have Already Had to Deal With One or More

Our questionnaire shows that most Canadian municipalities know that emergencies are not a question of *whether*, but of *when*. Fully 48 percent of respondents said that their municipality had already declared a state of emergency as a result of a natural or human-induced threat to the community. One out of three said that their emergencies had been designated as provincial emergencies.

Virtually every Canadian community recognizes that there should be some municipal official designated to prepare for emergencies and to take charge in the event of an emergency. Of the 92 respondents, 97 percent said that their municipality had an Emergency Management Organization (EMO) in place. Fully 100 percent told us that they had a dedicated emergency operations centre (64 percent) or a designated structure that can be used as an operations centre (36 percent).

Unless a community is content to deal with emergencies on an ad hoc basis, there wouldn't be much point in having an EMO if that office didn't conduct risk assessments. Canadian municipalities understand this: 95 percent of respondents said their communities conduct risk assessments, and 71 percent conduct these assessments as part of a federally standardized process (even though the Committee has determined that there is no uniform national standard for emergency planning or risk assessments).

While 61 percent cited 'terrorism as a concern' for their community, only 36 percent have a counter-terrorism response plan. This may be because smaller

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communities do not see terrorism as a particular risk. As noted in Problem 12, It may also be because some municipalities seem to think that terrorism is a job for federal police, even though local police would likely be involved in responding to any incident.

Of those that put a time frame on how often they conduct such assessments, 45 percent said every year, 12 percent said every 3-5 years and 8 percent said five years or longer – suggesting perhaps that it has been done once in recent years.

Responding to Changes in Threat Assessments

The high percentage of communities that do risk assessments every year (including all of the larger cities) demonstrates that these communities clearly recognize that the nature and level of threats can change very quickly and need to be reassessed on a regular basis.

Of course, reassessment is worthless if it doesn't have the potential to lead to change. Consider a community that has received some funding from JEPP or from a provincial source in the past, and wishes to determine whether the emergency preparedness measures it has taken are adequate. It decides to do a reassessment for a number of good reasons. It . . .

- has upped its interest in emergency preparedness
- has hired someone trained in emergency preparedness
- has sent staff for training in emergency preparedness
- has recognized that it was ignoring a significant threat

Or it may simply be that something has happened within or near a municipality to change the nature or level of threat.

Municipalities are encouraged by senior levels of government to do risk assessment.

The problem is with the next step. If the community is going to come up with new insights into what it needs to respond to potential emergencies, surely the governments that pushed for the assessments should be standing

by ready to respond to the results.

If a municipality determines that there is either an urgent reason – or simply a legitimate, prudent reason – for investing more money in emergency preparedness, where can the municipality get the money to do that within months, rather than years?

From its own coffers? Canadian municipalities, creatures of the provinces, are notoriously tight for funds every year and come under intense pressure from homeowners to keep property taxes down. Councilors who ignore visible everyday issues like inadequate public transit, deteriorating roads, overflowing sewers and tardy snow clearing do so at their own peril.

Emergency preparedness is a vital issue for municipalities, but it is not one of these omnipresent issues. It is largely hidden in the shadows as people go about their everyday lives. Most municipalities are simply unlikely to siphon off their own budgets for major overhauls to emergency preparedness – even if a reassessment has shown that they should. Emergencies are low-probability, high-impact possibilities. Most homeowners purchase insurance for low-probability, high-impact events, which is the rational thing to do. But somehow that often doesn't translate into politics, and a lot of emergency prevention money doesn't get spent until *after* a disaster, when emotions, rather than reason, rules the day.

Unless a municipality can attract a timely injection of federal or provincial funds for emergency preparedness when a clear case can be made for improvements, those improvements will either not be made, or will not be made when they should be made.

What We Heard From Respondents About Rigid Systems and Inadequate Funding

Five out of every six Canadian municipalities (83 percent) that responded to the Committee's survey say they have applied for funding under the federal governments JEPP program. Only 22 percent expressed themselves satisfied with what the program has provided them, although 36 percent said they were at least "somewhat" satisfied, for a total of 58 percent. Seven out of every ten Canadian municipalities (72 percent) have applied for

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funding from their province. Of these, only 20 percent said they were satisfied with the funding, although 35 percent allowed that they were “somewhat” satisfied.

WIDESPREAD LACK OF SATISFACTION WITH FUNDING: You know that both federal and provincial governments have some work to do when only about one-fifth of municipalities across the country are fully satisfied with the way emergency preparedness is funded by both the federal government and their province.

Again, there were two main complaints about both federal and provincial programs – rigid funding systems and inadequate funds. Here are some of the comments respondents made in these two areas:

IN THEIR OWN WORDS, MUNICIPAL OFFICERS ADDRESS THEIR FRUSTRATIONS OVER FUNDING

No Sustaining Funding or Consultation

“Where the federal government has contributed, it has been in the form of one-off capital funds with no contingency for operating, maintenance, or life cycling . . . There is also a concern over lack of consultation at the municipal level over JEPP funding. The opportunity is frequently missed to focus funding programs such as JEPP on the sustainable development of regional resources to address critical emerging needs.”

Bruce Burrell
Fire Chief and Head of Disaster Service
Calgary, Alberta

Money Allotted Unreasonable

“Allocate a reasonable amount of money – \$5 million nationwide is pitiful. Raise the federal contribution percentage (75%) Change the philosophy to building resilient and responsive programs. Do not tie it to specific elements (i.e. not just communications or response vehicles, but include analysis and studies, salaries, anything that improves the level of

emergency management to that expected post 9/11, post Katrina). Align the administration to the municipal budget process.”

Richard Kinchlea
Emergency Measures Coordinator
Hamilton, Ontario

Balancing Budgets Gives Emergencies Short Shrift

“Municipalities are required to submit balanced budgets and oftentimes emergency management funding is cut in order to allow the municipality to provide existing day-to-day services. Therefore there should be more emergency management-specific funding opportunities made available to municipalities by the provincial government to allow municipalities to attain a higher standard of preparedness.”

Barry Manuel
Emergency Measures Organization Coordinator
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Responsibilities Legislated, but Not Funded

“Emergency management is one program amongst many that must compete for a share of the limited funds available on which the city operates. Increasing legislated requirements with respect to what municipalities must do in regards to emergency management without increasing the provision of funding assistance means that something possibly won’t be done at the time and to the standard expected.”

Bruce L. Griffin,
Community Emergency Planner
Barrie, Ontario

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Provinces Ignore Need to Prepare

“Provincial legislation prescribes what municipalities must do with respect to emergency management. It monitors to ensure compliance with the legislation, but provides no funding and few resources to assist municipalities achieve and maintain the requisite level of emergency management, The provincial government provides funding for disaster relief assistance, but not for preparedness. There’s nothing other than what we get from the federally-funded JEPP program.”

“The limitations (e.g. funding only once every five years for coming up with emergency plans; once every three years for emergency exercises; or a \$40,000 limit for specialized vehicles or equipment) are just not reasonable. Plans should be re-examined and exercises conducted yearly. It makes no sense that all work related to an emergency plan can only get funding once every five years. If a grant is provided to create an overall emergency plan in Year 1, then in Year 2 the community is not eligible for another grant for an evacuation plan, a dangers goods spill response plan, a recovery plan, a business continuity plan, etc. This limitation means a manic year trying to do all your planning at once, and then four years of limping along. It would be much more reasonable to be able to complete one or two plans each year, rather than get them all done at once. The cap of \$40,000 for equipment is ridiculous. What can you get for \$40,000? We would like to get a new mobile command vehicle, which would probably cost \$500,000. Greater assistance is required. It’s very difficult to try to wring \$500,000 out of a municipal budget.’

Deborah Proctor
Manager of Emergency Programs
Richmond, British Columbia

Funding Templates Ignore Local Needs

“Funding programs are limited to federal/provincial initiatives and priorities . . . [the] needs of the municipality are kept to a strict set of criteria that often does not reflect the priorities of the municipality. The programs are templated rather than ‘ need assessment ‘ driven....

Funding should be based on needs assessments with the province taking leadership in key areas with resources to address programs. There are clearly common short falls in all regions of the province where a common policy and initiative would help.

These areas include:

- (a) enhancing GIS capabilities and shared data (especially shared data)*
- (b) co-ordinating resources to maximize value for money.*
- (c) funding for enhanced training and response.*
- (d) flexibility to address costly conversions such as auxiliary power.*
- (e) regional structure for regional responses*
- (f) broader working groups to include provincial departments with little funding but important contributions.”*

John Allain
Director of Emergency Planning
Moncton, New Brunswick

Funds Difficult to Apply For

Funds are not always easy to access – excessive amounts of information are required in the application. Often our needs do not “qualify” for JEPP funding. The amount of JEPP monies allocated to the province is very small.

There is insufficient funding for

- planning resources (i.e., for evacuation plans, contingency plans, etc.)*
- the vast number of hazards in the community, including the pending arrival of liquefied natural gas*

Yvonne Huntington
Director, Emergency Management Organization
Saint John, New Brunswick

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Local Hazards Ignored, Funding Skimpy

“It’s not like [the City of Sarnia] abuses the system. I would say we have been constantly overlooked for hazmat funding when you consider that we represented over 80 percent of the chemical production in Ontario in a border city which could impact on First Nations, federal lands, federal waterways and on U.S. soil. Funding for Emergency Alerting Systems are our main funding concerns because there are no funding opportunities offered by federal or provincial governments, yet this is probably the most important aspect of emergency planning management – informing your citizens who may be in harm’s way. We have applied twice [for emergency preparedness funding] since 1998. We were turned down by the Province of Ontario in 1998 because we submitted our application a day late, even though we had received verbal permission. We submitted a JEPP application in 2006 and were granted \$2,959.11 toward two new radios for the E.O.C., with the city having to contribute 55 percent of the cost.”

Calvin Gardner
Community Emergency Management Coordinator
Sarnia, Ontario

Onerous Application Process

“Federal and provincial governments regularly introduce programs in a manner that necessitates a tremendous waste of local taxpayers’ money and resources. They are introduced in a manner that requires each individual municipality to dedicate staff, resources and legal fees to study, interpret the requirements, seek legal opinion, and prepare their individual programs. Downloaded programs should come with clear and definitive minimum requirements, easily applied templates, and funding to make it happen.”

Gordon Gazeley
Fire Chief
Belleville, Ontario

“We received no funding towards our EOC when we were led to believe it was almost a sure thing . . . [one of our main concerns is] getting council to allocate us enough money to accomplish the goals we have set for our program.”

Tim Lindsay
Emergency Management Coordinator
Brantford, Ontario

Reacting to Disasters Rather Than Preparing

“There is money available for response and, to a lesser degree, recovery. Where there is a distinct lack of funding is on the preparedness portion. There is no funding available for public education and this is precisely where the funding is most needed . . . Our main concerns remain public education (including establishing neighbourhood programs) and the funding (cost sharing) needed to establish stockpiles of emergency supplies.”

Emergency Management Officials
Chilliwack, British Columbia

Money for Hazard Assessments, None for Following Up

“The City of Coquitlam greatly appreciates the funds that have been provided by JEPP for the completion of projects. However, the criteria however for the projects is limiting and should be reconsidered. Under Section 2.2 of the JEPP Guidelines, the projects that are eligible for funding include Emergency Plans – or updating Emergency Plans – once every five years). A hazard, risk and vulnerability analysis is considered as part of this section. If a community conducts a hazard, risk and vulnerability analysis and receives funding, the next year it is not eligible to receive funds to write plans. In Coquitlam, we wrote our own disaster response plan in house, received money to conduct a hazard, risk and vulnerability analysis and then applied to get funding two years later to complete detailed evacuation plans using the highest identified hazards. Unfortunately, the application was rejected because we had received

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money to conduct the HRVA. I would greatly appreciate a review of the project eligibility and a consideration to decrease the length of time between eligible applications for plan writing.”

Dorit Mason
Manager of Emergency Programs
Coquitlam, British Columbia

Ignoring Specific Community Needs

“Criteria for the purchase of equipment do not satisfy the needs of the community.”

Ken Neilson
Emergency Coordinator
Victoria, British Columbia

Insufficient Funding

“Emergency management budgets are minuscule. It is difficult to obtain funding for potential disasters when communities have to deal with urgent problems and insufficient funds on a daily basis” [translation]

Jacques Rathwell
Responsable sécurité civile
Gatineau, Québec

One-Off Funding, No Infrastructure Model

“[Our community’s] main concerns/challenges regarding funding for emergency management is that there is no base funding for ongoing processes. Funding continues to be focused on individual projects rather than encouraging regional approaches. There is no infrastructure model for key components (communication, training, management tools,

software and hardware).”

Bill Walker
Fire Chief and Protective Services Director
Grande Prairie, Alberta

Money Needed for Training

“[Our main requests would be] that major costs be supported and that legislated requirements that are driven down to the municipal level – like training – be supported.”

Harry Dunning
Community Emergency Management Coordinator
Guelph, Ontario

No Training Money for Smaller Communities

“Funding for training is limited to communities under 20,000 people. We don’t qualify. And yet if there was an allowance for a wide spread [emergency], people would come to us for help because we’re a regional capital.”

Brian Cornforth
Chief of Fire and Emergency Services
Lethbridge, Alberta

Funds Needed to Test Plans

“Funding for additional training at the local level would be an improvement. Communities need to practice their disaster plan. However, budgets are restricted and agencies are reluctant to cover costs for their organization. Additional funding at the local area would alleviate this.”

Randy Crashley
Emergency Measures Coordinator / Deputy Fire Chief
Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN CANADA

Backup Power Required

“Funding for suitable back-up hydro generation to mitigate ice storm or major blackout is needed, but is cost prohibitive.”

Ted McCullough
Community Emergency Management Coordinator / Fire Chief
North Bay, Ontario

Ignoring Community’s Real Needs

“There should be more emphasis put into projects that reflect the real need of communities . . . There has been too much emphasis given to HUSAR and PERT and those types of entities with the focus on terrorism. It has become abundantly clear over the past few years that the real threat to municipalities is the weather. If you look at the costs associated with disasters within the country it has not been terrorism but mother nature. This is not to say that we cannot be diligent in our efforts towards terrorism but too many people are profiting from it and too much money is being spent on it when the real killer has been the weather.”

Trent Elyea
Community Emergency Management Coordinator
Orillia, Ontario

Risk Assessment Should Drive Grant Structure

“The time to process funding is significant (in some cases 2–3 years) although it is understood that steps are being taken to establish a 6-month turnaround time. The Federal government has the opportunity to work with the Provinces and Municipalities to establish a grant process that is based on building geographical specific emergency management capacity and capability. Risk assessments should drive grant structure and eligibility with the goal of addressing local provincial and federal capacity and capability. Emergency management goes beyond the need for equipment to respond. Federal/Provincial funding should contribute to the

building of activity along the full spectrum of emergency management: prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery (including continuity of operations).”

John Ash
Manager of the Office of Emergency Management
Ottawa, Ontario

Funding Ignores Need for Maintenance, Training

“Maintaining adequate training needed for these new initiatives is a concern because it is expensive. The assistance with the initial expense is important and appreciated but the maintenance is a real challenge in areas like HUSAR and CBRN.”

Ray Unrau
Emergency Measures Coordinator
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Emergency Costs Downloaded

“Costs/responsibilities for emergency preparedness have been all downloaded to the municipality without any associated funding ... Basically no funding available for planning or preparedness from either the Federal or Provincial Government in spite of the demands and expectations placed upon the municipality to prepare for emergencies by both levels of government.”

Lee Campbell
Sgt. Planning and Research, Sault Ste Marie Police Service / Community
Emergency Management Coordinator
Sault Ste Marie, Ontario

High costs, low funding

“Is the investment really necessary? Given that we have to pay for new technologies so that crisis situations can be better handled and that

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN CANADA

specialized equipment like a mobile command post is very expensive to buy, governments must contribute financially” [translation]

Michel Houde
Conseiller en sécurité civile
Saguenay / Chicoutimi – Jonquière, Québec

Need for Predictable, Stable Funding

“Funding from the provincial government for emergency management per se is not available. There are funds for assistance after a disaster has occurred (e.g. for SARS). The Province of Ontario facilitates our applications for JEPP funds . . . There should be base funding available that is predictable and stable to enable us to engage in multi-year planning for emergency plan development, exercises and corrective actions. Funding for correction action is often overlooked as the focus tends to remain on the response phase. Some corrective actions may involve changes to procedures, others may require capital expenditures, specialised multi-agency responder training, technology upgrades, stockpiling, recovery, public alerting, public education etc. Some of these initiatives have to be repeated and continual e.g. public education. We constantly compete for funding.”

Warren Leonard
Manager of the Office of Emergency Management
Toronto, Ontario

Hard to Stay Up to Date

“We could use funding to help offset cost of an expanded EOC with more modern amenities. The existing EOC is growing inadequate to meet current needs.”

David T. Fields
Commissioner of Fire Services / Fire Chief
Windsor, Ontario

No Money for Public Warning Systems

“We have been attempting to establish a siren warning system for our community but JEPP funding is not applicable to equipment used for alerting and the expense is not manageable for us at this time.”

Brian Kayes
Director of Emergency Coordination
Brandon, Manitoba

Major centres need to support smaller neighbouring communities

“Upgrading the local action plan to meet national objectives requires significant investment, especially in human resources.

A new expense for municipalities. Major centres in regions required to do more than their share.” [translation]

Claude Proulx
Coordonateur des mesures d’urgence / Directeur Général
Drummondville, Quebec

Outdated, Minimal Management Funding

“Historically, [the provincial funding program] was created to meet specific needs in the early 1990s. But now the program budgets do not reflect risk – just what is the minimal requirement.”

Randy Hull
Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
Winnipeg, Manitoba

No Regional Plans to Coordinate Needs

“There are too many limitations to access funding. There is no provincial or regional plan to coordinate funding needs.”

Dwight Osbaldeston
Fire Chief
County of Strathcona, Alberta

Municipal Perceptions of Provincial and Federal Responsiveness to Their Needs

Ideally, emergency risk management funding would always be based on need assessments conducted by the municipalities. Two factors make this impossible in the real world. First, smaller municipalities do not always have the resources to do anything more than cursory risk assessment. Secondly, no provincial or federal government is going to provide unlimited funds for any kind of spending, lest municipalities with overblown assessments of their needs unnecessarily drain the public purse.

Our survey found that 64 percent of respondents said they received funding that was at least to some degree based on their own assessment of their needs. But the comments above make it clear that there is often a huge gap between what kind of investment in emergency preparedness makes sense to municipalities and what makes sense to the senior governments that fund them.

Non-Funding Issues

While financing issues were a hot topic with our responders, the questionnaire also dealt with a number of other issues on which the Committee also received helpful responses. Here are brief synopses of some of the general responses we received in relation to those issues. **A complete list of findings of the 2007 survey of emergency preparedness can be found in Appendix A.**

Help from Neighbouring Communities

The more Canadian communities can come together to assist one another during emergencies, the better for all concerned, particularly since help will often be needed in minutes rather than days. It was therefore heartening to see that many neighbouring communities across Canada have put their heads together on emergency preparation.

Fully 80 percent of surveyed municipalities said they have had agreements in place with surrounding communities to provide assistance in the event of an emergency. A complementary 79 percent felt that “such agreements are necessary.”

Self-Sustainability

How long can municipalities sustain themselves before provincial or federal help arrives during a major disaster? The estimates that the Committee received varied: 10 percent said 24 hours; 14 percent said 48 hours; 37 percent said 72 hours; 15 percent said 96 hours; and 23 percent said what the reader is probably thinking: “it depends on the disaster.”

Computers Particularly Vulnerable

One might guess that nothing makes a municipality fret more than the prospect of a CBRNE disaster (involving intentional or accidental misuse of chemicals, biological organisms, radiation, nuclear devices, or explosives).

One would be wrong.

Respondents were divided over whether their municipality had the capacity to manage a CBRNE incident – 47 percent said yes; 50 percent said no.

They were far less divided as to whether their municipal computer systems could manage a cyber attack: only 27 percent said yes and 60 percent said no.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN CANADA

Stockpiled Supplies

Many Canadian communities do not appear to be depending on the federal government's emergency stockpiles to get them through a disaster (see NESS, Problem 4). Only 23 percent of municipalities said that they regard the NESS caches as their emergency stockpiles. While 60 percent said they knew of the NESS program, only 31 percent said they have access to a cache and believe its contents would be useful.

Community Awareness

A critical aspect of emergency management is communication with the public, both before a disaster (to help optimize preparation) and during and following a disaster (to help optimize survival and recovery).

Before an Emergency: Proactive communication can save lives. Do members of the public know if there are designated shelters that can be used during a tornado? Does the average person in a municipality know what protection and basic supplies they will need to keep their family safe in the event of a flood?

The majority of respondents said that their municipalities have ways of getting through to the public as to what citizens should do in case of an emergency. More than three out of four Canadian communities – 77 percent – have used one means or another to educate their citizens on what to do in case of a disaster, but 22 percent have not.

During or After an Emergency: Reactive communications are obviously key to surviving a disaster, but Canadian communities fall short in this area.

While 76 percent of respondents said they had some ability to interrupt television and radio broadcasts, most acknowledged that they must first receive the consent of the broadcasters. Only 23 percent of municipalities say they have the ability to unilaterally interrupt local television or radio broadcasts.

As officials from the municipality of Chatham-Kent, Ontario wrote:

“We work with the constraints of the private contractors. If they choose to interrupt the broadcasts they will. If not it will wait until the usual news reports.”

Ginger Sherlock, Emergency Planning Coordinator for Langley, British Columbia, saw little point in having arbitrary control to interrupt local broadcasters:

“We would communicate to our local media, and if the emergency is local only, but important enough, we would have all the media one could handle already here, in the way. I know what you refer to, yet with satellite dishes and cable channels, very few individuals watch local stations for something to do, and satellite does not allow local stations on it – I have tried. As a notification system – I would find this inadequate; much coordination for very few notified.”

First Responders:

(a) Equipment and (b) Training

In the midst of a disaster, any community wants its first responders to be well equipped and well trained. Our questionnaire produced mixed results on these issues.

(a) For instance, 62 percent of municipalities have interoperable first responder communications (fire, police, paramedics, etc.); only 36 percent are based on federal standards. Only 17 percent responded that their local systems are interoperable with provincial, federal (or American) authorities. In two-thirds of cases (66 percent) they were not.

(b) Canada’s main centre for emergency management training is the Canadian Emergency Management College (CEMC) in Ottawa, run by Public Safety Canada. Originally established in 1954 to provide programs in wartime civil defence planning, the College provides training for emergency management officials from all levels of government.

Only 58 percent of respondents said that first responders from their municipality had received training at the CEMC, and only 18 per percent of surveyed municipalities said the training offered to municipal officials at the CEMC is sufficient.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN CANADA

Role of the Canadian Forces

The role of the military is vital to responding to emergencies, as we noted in discussing Problem 2. Our survey found that awareness of the Canadian Forces' role in emergency management and response is improving, with plenty of room to improve more.

Fully 85 percent of municipalities expect the Canadian Forces to provide assistance to their community in the event of a disaster, and 75 percent of respondents said they were aware of the existence of Canadian Forces Canada Command, the entity in charge of all domestic Forces operations. On the other hand, only 46 percent had actually liaised with Canada Command.

61 percent of respondents said there is a Canadian Forces Reserve Unit located in their community, but only 45 percent knew what role the Reserves could be expected to play in an emergency. Only 32 percent had involved the Reserves in emergency planning.

Urban Search and Rescue

Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) capacity comes in handy during emergencies. But 82 per cent of respondents said their municipality does not have an USAR team based in their community. At the time the survey was taken, Ottawa, Thunder Bay and Victoriaville were developing an USAR capability. Only 12 other communities we surveyed currently have some Urban Search and Rescue capability – either light, medium or heavy.

Of the 12 USAR teams, eight of them do have agreements in place calling on their team to provide regional support to neighbouring municipalities.

In terms of USAR funding, municipalities are looking in all directions: 20 percent believed that the provincial government should provide funding for USAR; 26 percent believed that it should be the federal government; 36 per cent say USAR should receive three-way funding from provincial, federal and local coffers.

Critical Infrastructure Protection

If infrastructure is of critical national importance, the Canadian government should be involved in protecting it. As discussed in Problem 10, this is an area in which the federal government has not been sufficiently proactive, and our survey results reflect this.

While 84 percent of municipalities can point to critical infrastructure within their boundaries, only 58 percent of communities have a plan in place to protect this infrastructure. Moreover, there appears to be considerable confusion as to whose responsibility it is to protect it. Most of our respondents didn't even want to take a guess – 10 percent thought they were responsible; 20 per cent guessed they weren't; and the rest threw up their hands and did not respond.

Appendix A: Complete Findings of 2007 Emergency Management Survey

Of the 100 emergency preparedness questionnaires sent out to municipalities in 10 provinces, we received completed surveys from 92 communities. Each survey contains 94 questions and sub-questions.

This section outlines the key quantitative findings²⁰⁴ of the survey of emergency preparedness conducted by the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence between the spring and fall of 2007.

The findings of the 2007 Survey are organized according to the format of the emergency preparedness questionnaire. Each section displays aggregate survey results followed by the Committee's key findings in that section. Where appropriate, the Committee compares the findings of the 2007 survey to the Committee's 2003 survey.

**THE COMMITTEE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL
EMERGENCY MANAGERS AND FIRST
RESPONDERS WHO COMPLETED THE SURVEY.**

The Committee also takes this opportunity to ask first responders: what did you think of our survey? Is there anything that could be improved upon for next time? Your input is most valued by members of the Committee.

Please send all feedback about the survey to the Clerk of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence at DEFENCE@SEN.PARL.GC.CA

Clerk of the Standing Senate Committee on
National Security and Defence
40 Elgin Street, 10th floor
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A4

²⁰⁴ Non-quantitative survey questions were omitted from the survey results displayed in this section. To gain a full appreciation of a community's response to the survey, please see volumes 2, 3 and 4 of this report.

FINDINGS OF 2007 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SURVEY

1. Emergencies and Communities

SURVEY RESULTS

1	YOUR COMMUNITY	Percentage	No. of Community Responses
1b	In your community		
	Rural	0%	0
	Urban	37%	34
	Mixed	63%	58
1c	is your community near/include		
	Major industrial facility	82%	60
	Border crossing	20%	3
	Port/Airport, or transportation Hub	82%	60
	All of the Above	16%	15
1d	does your community have an EMO		
	Yes	98%	90
	No	2%	2
1e	have you ever declared a state of emergency as a result of a natural or human induced incident?		
	Yes	48%	44
	No	51%	47
1f	Has your province declared a state of emergency as a result of a declaration in your community of a state of local emergency?		
	Yes	17%	16
	No	79%	73

FINDINGS

- The Committee found from responses to **Questions 1E and 1F**, of the 44 municipalities which declared an emergency, 16 municipalities (36%) had their local emergency turn into a provincial emergency. *This means over a third of respondents who experienced emergencies have been the starting site of a provincially recognized disaster.*

2. Risk Assessments & Standards

SURVEY RESULTS

2	RISK ASSESSMENT	Percentage	No. of Community Responses
2a	Does your community conduct a risk assessment to determine the likelihood that its citizens will be affected by a natural or human-induced disaster or state of local emergency?		
	Yes	95%	87
	No	5%	5
	If yes, is this risk assessment based on:		
	A provincially standardized process?	71%	65
	A federally standardized process?	4%	4
2b	How often does your community conduct a risk assessment?		
	5 + years	8%	7
	every 3-5 years	12%	11
	every 2 years	8%	7
	Yearly	43%	40
	more than once a year	2%	2
	ongoing basis/no set time period	15%	14
2c	Which departments, agencies or organizations are involved in conducting your community's risk assessment?		
	Police	25%	23
	Fire	33%	30
	Paramedic	7%	6
	Public Health	13%	12
	Local EMO	27%	25
	Municipal Government	30%	28
	All of the above	52%	48
	The Province is consulted	60%	55
	The Federal Government is consulted	14%	13

FINDINGS OF 2007 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SURVEY

2d	Does your community involve industry when conducting its risk assessment?		
	Yes	65%	60
	No	32%	29
2e	Is a disaster or state of local emergency caused by an act of terrorism a concern for your community?		
	Yes	61%	56
	No	38%	35
	If yes, does your community have a counter-terrorism response plan?		
	Yes	36%	33
	No	30%	28

FINDINGS

Risk Assessment Practices

- From responses to **Questions 2A and 2B**, the Committee found that the vast majority of communities conduct risk assessments (95%). Nearly half (43%) conduct yearly risk assessments, and for the rest, there is substantial variation regarding the frequency of risk assessments.
- Responses to **Question 2C and 2D** indicated that over half (52%) of the municipalities surveyed consulted all the main emergency actors during their risk assessment (Police, Fire, Paramedic, Public Health, Local EMO, Municipal Government), while the rest consulted some but not all. The majority of communities also consulted the province (60%) and private industry when conducting risk assessments (65%).

Terrorism as a Risk

- The answers to **questions 2E** are somewhat contradictory: while 61 % of municipalities cite ‘terrorism as a concern’ for their community, only 36 % have a counter-terrorism response plan. There are a number of reasons for this disparity.

As discussed in Problem 12, one of the reasons for the lack of a local counter-terrorism plan is that there is confusion surrounding the roles of federal and local police. Another reason is that some cities do not think the probability of a terrorist attack is large.

As Mike Ross, Deputy Fire Chief and Coordinator of Disaster Service for Lethbridge, Alberta wrote in his municipality’s survey response:

“We are a mid sized City in rural Southern Alberta, while we understand the potential of a terrorist act; our assets are such that it would be of limited value for publicity.”

Or, as Michael Gornyiczki, Deputy Fire Chief and Community Emergency Management Coordinator for Stratford, Ontario wrote in his municipality’s survey response:

“At this point it is presumed that we would be much more susceptible to a natural disaster vs. an act of terrorism.”

3. Community Response Capability

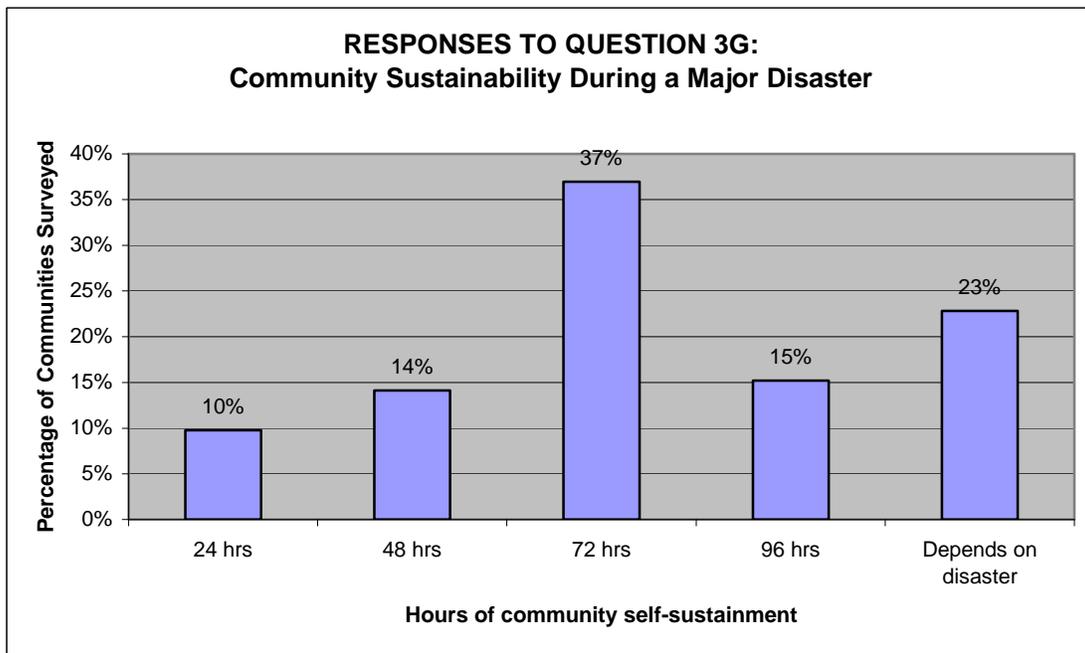
SURVEY RESULTS

3	Response Capability	Percentage	No. of Community Responses
3a	How prepared is your community to respond to a major emergency or disaster?		
	Prepared	59%	54
	somewhat prepared	40%	37
	Unprepared	1%	1
	do not know	0%	0
3b	How well prepared do you think the federal government is to respond to a major disaster such as Hurricane Katrina?		
	prepared	15%	14
	somewhat prepared	52%	48
	unprepared	24%	22
	do not know	9%	8

FINDINGS OF 2007 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SURVEY

3c	How confident are you that the provincial government will support municipal emergency response efforts in the event of a disaster or declaration of a state of local emergency?		
	very confident	45%	41
	confident	45%	41
	no confidence	7%	6
	do not know	7%	6
3d	Does your community have a dedicated emergency operations centre?		
	yes	64%	59
	no	36%	33
	if no, is there a designated structure to be used as an EMC		
	yes	36%	33
	no	0%	0
3e	Has your community established an incident command structure/incident management structure (ICS/IMS) which would be utilized in case of a disaster or state of local emergency?		
	yes	85%	78
	no	15%	14
3f	Does your community have agreements in place with surrounding communities to provide assistance or request assistance in the event of a disaster or state of local emergency?		
	Yes	80%	74
	No	16%	15
	Do you think such agreements are necessary?		
	Yes	79%	73
	No	9%	8

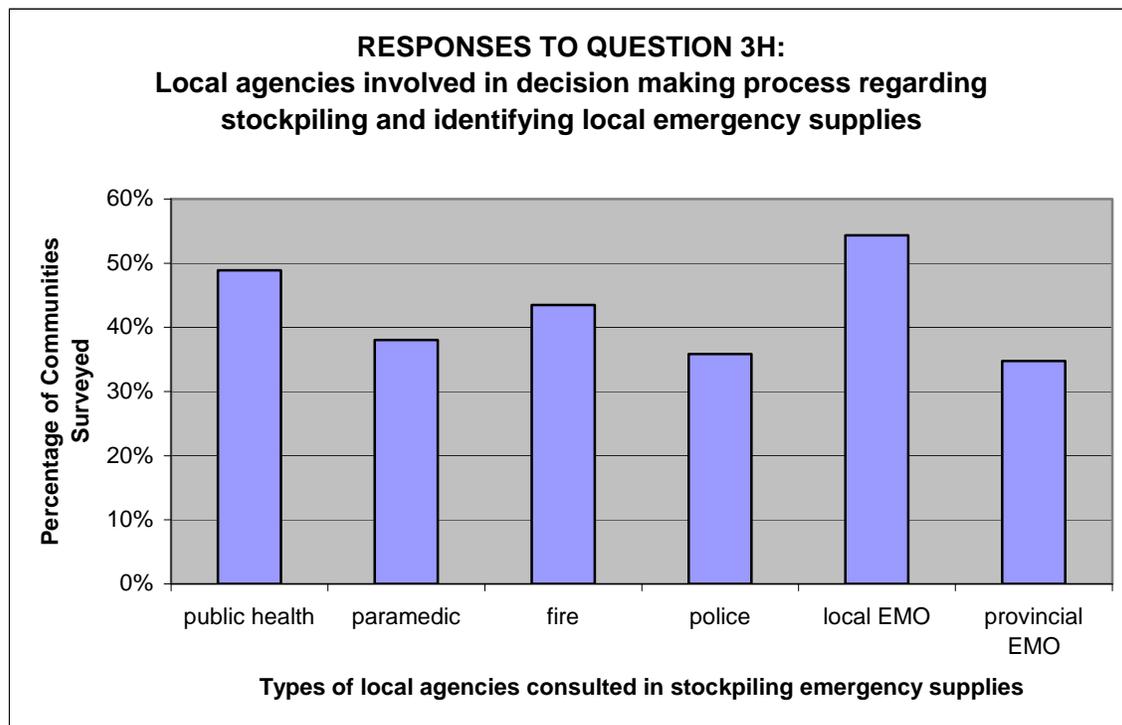
3g	If a disaster was to occur in your community, how long could your community sustain itself before outside help is required?		
	24 hrs	10%	9
	48 hrs	14%	13
	72 hrs	37%	34
	96 hrs	15%	14
	Depends on disaster	23%	21



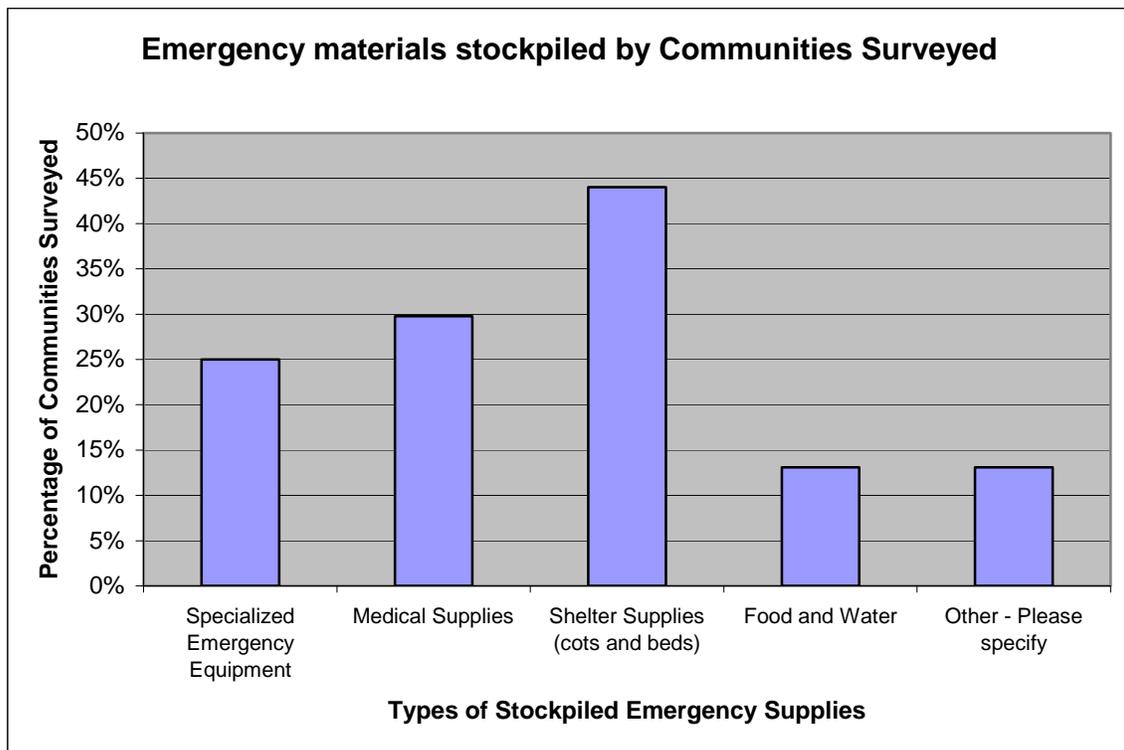
3h²⁰⁵	Which agencies are involved in the decision making process?		
	public health	49%	45
	paramedic	38%	35
	fire	43%	40
	police	36%	33
	local EMO	54%	50
	provincial EMO	35%	32
	all the above	16%	15

²⁰⁵ While the first part of the original question 3H asked “Has your community identified and stockpiled supplies that could be used in case of an emergency?” follow up question 2A replaces the original responses, due to the greater precision (number of responses) of the latter.

FINDINGS OF 2007 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SURVEY



FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS			
2a	Has your community identified and/or stockpiled supplies that could be used in case of an emergency?		
	Yes	74%	62
	Provincial emergency supplies have been identified and agreements are in place on when and how they will be used in an emergency	20%	17
	Local Private sector suppliers have been identified and agreements have been made regarding their role during an emergency	27%	23
	Stockpiled supplies	56%	47
	Specialized Emergency Equipment	25%	21
	Medical Supplies	30%	25
	Shelter Supplies (cots and beds)	44%	37
	Food and Water	13%	11
	Other - Please specify	13%	11
	None of the Above	24%	20



2b	Are these stockpiled supplies the federal caches from the National Emergency Stockpile System (NESS)?		
	Yes	23%	19
	No	57%	48
2c	Health Canada informed the Committee that there are about 1, 600 National Emergency Stockpile System (NESS) caches strategically located across Canada. Do you know of this program and do you have access to a cache?		
	yes, I know of the NESS program	60%	50
	I have access to a NESS cache	31%	26
	I have access to a cache and can confirm its usefulness	14%	12
	I was consulted on what supplies should be stockpiled in the caches	1%	1
	No	40%	34

FINDINGS OF 2007 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SURVEY

FINDINGS

This section of the questionnaire surveyed a broad range of topics related to municipal response capabilities including perception of preparedness, perception of provincial aid, stockpiled supplies and the National Emergency Stockpile System (NESS).

Level of Preparedness

- In responses to **Question 3A**, 59% of municipalities write that they are “prepared to respond to a major disaster or emergency”. *This is a substantial increase from the responses of the 2003 survey, in which only 5.5% of survey respondents listed themselves as “prepared for a major emergency.”* There was also a corresponding decrease in the number of communities “somewhat prepared” for a major emergency, from 49% in 2003 to 40% in 2007.²⁰⁶
- Answers to **Question 3B** indicate municipalities’ lukewarm confidence in the federal government’s ability to respond to a large crisis. Only a small minority of communities believes the federal government is “prepared” to respond to a large disaster (15%); 52% believe the government to be “somewhat prepared” and 24% believe them to “unprepared”. *This resembles results of our 2003 survey, when 29% of respondents were “not confident” of the federal government’s ability to “coordinate the national-level response to a major disaster or emergency”; 55% “did not know” and 13% were “confident” that the federal government could handle a major disaster.*²⁰⁷
- Responses to **Question 3D** indicated that *all communities* either have a designated Emergency Operations Center (64%) or have designated a space for one (36%).

²⁰⁶ It should be noted that the 2003 survey defined “prepared” as having the “necessary plans, personnel and equipment ready” and “somewhat prepared” as having “plans in development” (see Appendix I pg. 116). In the 2007 survey the Committee offers no definition of “prepared” or “somewhat prepared.” This may account for some discrepancy between the numbers. Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada’s Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 86.

²⁰⁷ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada’s Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 103.

Provincial and Mutual Aid:

- The Committee found that, from responses to **Question 3C**, the vast majority (90%) of responding communities are either confident (45%) or very confident (45%) that they can count on provincial support during an emergency.
- The Committee found that, from answers to **Question 3F**, the majority of communities believe that mutual assistance between neighbouring communities is an important part of the emergency management framework. 80% having signed mutual aid agreements with neighbouring communities and 79% believe such agreements are important.

Stockpiled Supplies and the National Emergency Stockpile System (NESS):

- The Committee found that the majority of municipalities had independently stockpiled supplies unrelated to the NESS. Responses to **Follow Up Questions 2A and 2B** show that while 74% of communities stockpiled supplies, less than a third (23%) indicate that these are part of the NESS.

Regarding NESS, the Committee's key finding is that more communities are aware of the NESS program and have access to NESS caches.

- From answers to **Follow Up Question 2C**, 60% of communities surveyed knew about the NESS. *This is a dramatic increase from the findings of the 2003 survey, where only 23% of respondents claimed knowledge of the caches.*²⁰⁸ In the 2007 survey, about a third of responding municipalities reported having access to the cache (31%), compared to only 10% in 2003.

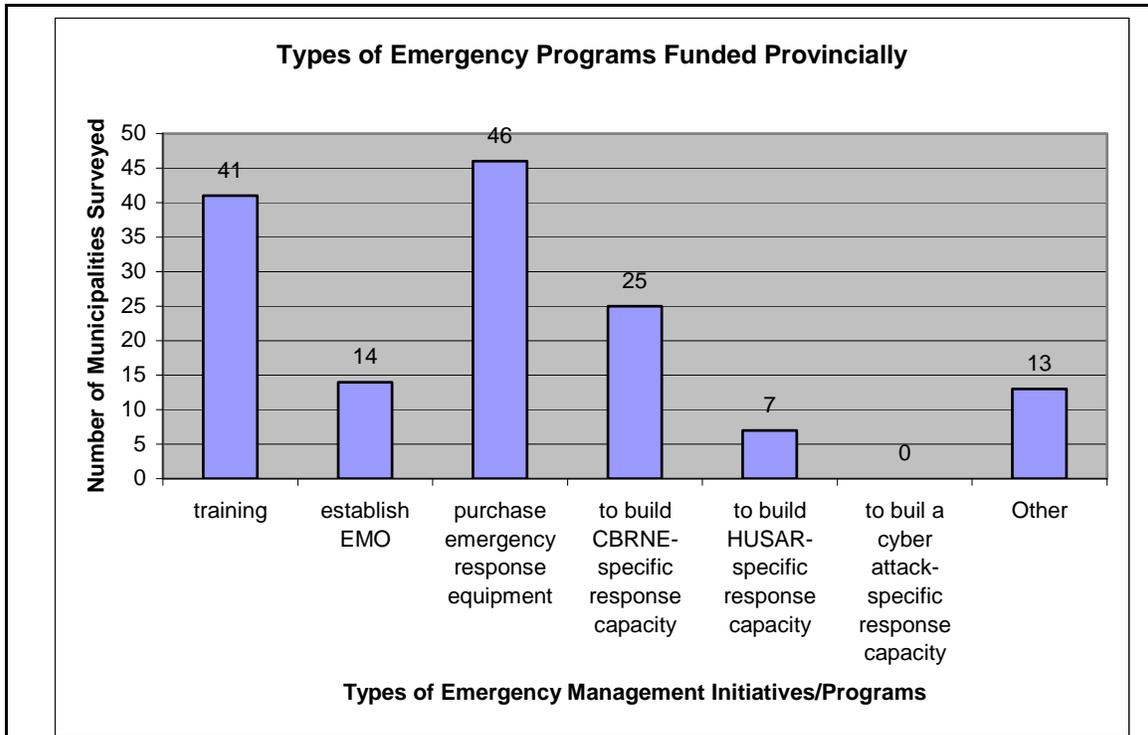
²⁰⁸ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 93.

FINDINGS OF 2007 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SURVEY

4. Funding for Emergency Management

SURVEY RESULTS

4	Funding	Percentage	No. of Community Responses
4a	Who serves as your community's chief resource for funding for emergency management?		
	municipal	98%	90
	provincial	12%	11
	federal	5%	5
4b	Are your communities funding needs for emergency management based on a needs/risk assessment?		
	Yes	64%	59
	No	34%	31
4c	Is your community aware of the funding mechanisms for emergency management provided by your provincial government?		
	Yes	95%	87
	No	4%	4
4d	Has your community applied for funding for emergency management from the provincial government?		
	Yes	72%	66
	No	26%	24
	if yes for what purpose		
	training	45%	41
	establish EMO	15%	14
	purchase emergency response equipment	50%	46
	To build CBRNE-specific response capacity	27%	25
	To build HUSAR-specific response capacity	8%	7
	To build a cyber attack-specific response capacity	0%	0
	Other	14%	13



4e	How satisfied is your community with provincial funding mechanisms for emergency management		
	satisfied	20%	18
	somewhat satisfied	35%	32
	not satisfied	33%	30
4f	Is your community aware of the funding mechanisms for emergency management provided by the federal government?		
	Yes	74%	68
	No	21%	19
4g	Has your community applied for funding for emergency management from the federal government through the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (JEPP)?		
	Yes	84%	77
	No	15%	14

FINDINGS OF 2007 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SURVEY

	if yes, how satisfied is your community with JEPP		
	Satisfied	22%	20
	somewhat satisfied	38%	35
	not satisfied	21%	19

FINDINGS

4(a) Provincial Funding

- From responses to **Questions 4C and 4D**, the Committee found that the vast majority of municipalities are aware of provincial emergency management funding. 94% of communities surveyed are aware of funding mechanisms provided by the provincial government, and 72% have applied for this funding.
- Responses to **Question 4E** indicate that only 20% of communities were “satisfied” with provincial funding while 35% were “somewhat satisfied” and 33% were “not satisfied”.

This variance in the survey response data can be explained by the written responses that the Committee received. For example, in his municipality’s survey response Bruce L. Griffin, Community Emergency Planner for Barrie, Ontario points to the gap between delegated emergency management responsibilities versus funding levels.

“Emergency management is one program amongst many that must compete for a share of the limited funds available on which the city operates. Increasing legislated requirements with respect to what municipalities must do in regards to emergency management without increasing the provision of funding assistance means that something possibly won’t be done at the time and to the standard expected.”

“...Provincial legislation prescribes what municipalities must do with respect to emergency management, monitors to ensure compliance with the legislation, but provides no funding and few resources to assist municipalities achieve and maintain the requisite level of emergency management.”

4(b) Federal Funding – JEPP (Joint Emergency Preparedness Program)

- In answers to **Question 4G**, the Committee found that 74% of municipalities are aware of funding mechanisms for emergency management provided by the federal government, while 84% had applied for funding under JEPP.²⁰⁹
- From responses to **Question 4G**, the Committee found that the levels of satisfaction with federal and provincial funding are similar. 22% of municipalities are “satisfied” with federal funding, while 20% are “satisfied” with provincial funding.

While many municipal emergency managers believe JEPP is a useful tool, many also found the funding scheme inadequate for three reasons.

The first reason that can explain these responses is the lack of continuous or “evergreening” funding for capabilities that are expensive to maintain. Bruce Burrell, Fire Chief and Head of Disaster Service for the City of Calgary wrote in his municipality’s survey response:

“Where the federal government has contributed, it has been in the form of one-off capital funds with no contingency for operating, maintenance, or life cycling . . . There is also a concern over lack of consultation at the municipal level over JEPP funding. The opportunity is frequently missed to focus funding programs such as JEPP on the sustainable development of regional resources to address critical emerging needs.”

Bill Walker, Fire Chief and Protective Services Director of Grande Prairie, Alberta wrote in his municipality’s survey response:

“Our community’s main concerns/challenges regarding funding for emergency management is that there is no base funding for ongoing processes. Funding continues to be focused on individual projects rather than encouraging regional approaches. There is no infrastructure model for key components (communication, training, management tools, software and hardware).”

²⁰⁹ Readers will notice the discrepancy of communities who applied for federal funding versus those who are aware of federal funding. JEPP is federally funded but provincially administered; some communities may have considered JEPP to be provincial funding.

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A second reason is the problems caused by the funding cycle of JEPP. Bruce L. Griffin, Community Emergency Planner for Barrie, Ontario wrote in his municipality's survey response:

“Timelines and process is too stringent. As a federal program, JEPP operates according to the federal fiscal year whereas municipalities budget and operate by the calendar year. This difference can be a significant hurdle when prosecuting a project that must be completed in one year yet spending is not to begin until the project has been accepted and funding authorized.”

Several emergency managers were unsatisfied with the very limited scope of emergency programs eligible for JEPP funding. Some pointed to limitations that were imposed on JEPP preparedness funding as opposed to response funding. As emergency management officials from Chilliwack, British Columbia wrote in their municipality's survey response:

“There is money available for response and, to a lesser degree, recovery. Where there is a distinct lack of funding is on the preparedness portion. There is no funding available for public education and this is precisely where the funding is most needed . . . Our main concerns remain public education (including establishing neighbourhood programs) and the funding (cost sharing) needed to establish stockpiles of emergency supplies.”

The third reason is the JEPP eligibility criteria. For example, Dorit Mason, Manager of Emergency Programs for Coquitlam, British Columbia, noted in her municipality's survey response:

“The City of Coquitlam greatly appreciates the funds that have been provided by JEPP for the completion of projects. However, the criteria however for the projects is limiting and should be reconsidered. Under Section 2.2 of the JEPP Guidelines, the projects that are eligible for funding include Emergency Plans – or updating Emergency Plans – once every five years). A hazard, risk and vulnerability analysis is considered as part of this section. If a community conducts a hazard, risk and vulnerability analysis and receives funding, the next year it is not eligible to receive funds to write plans.

In Coquitlam, we wrote our own disaster response plan in house, received money to conduct a hazard, risk and vulnerability analysis and then applied to get funding two years later to complete detailed evacuation plans using the highest identified hazards. Unfortunately, the application was rejected because we had received money to conduct the HRVA. I would greatly appreciate a review of the project eligibility and a consideration to decrease the length of time between eligible applications for plan writing.”

Ken Neilson, Emergency Coordinator for Victoria, British Columbia puts it even more simply in his community’s survey response:

“Criteria for the purchase of equipment do not satisfy the needs of the community.”

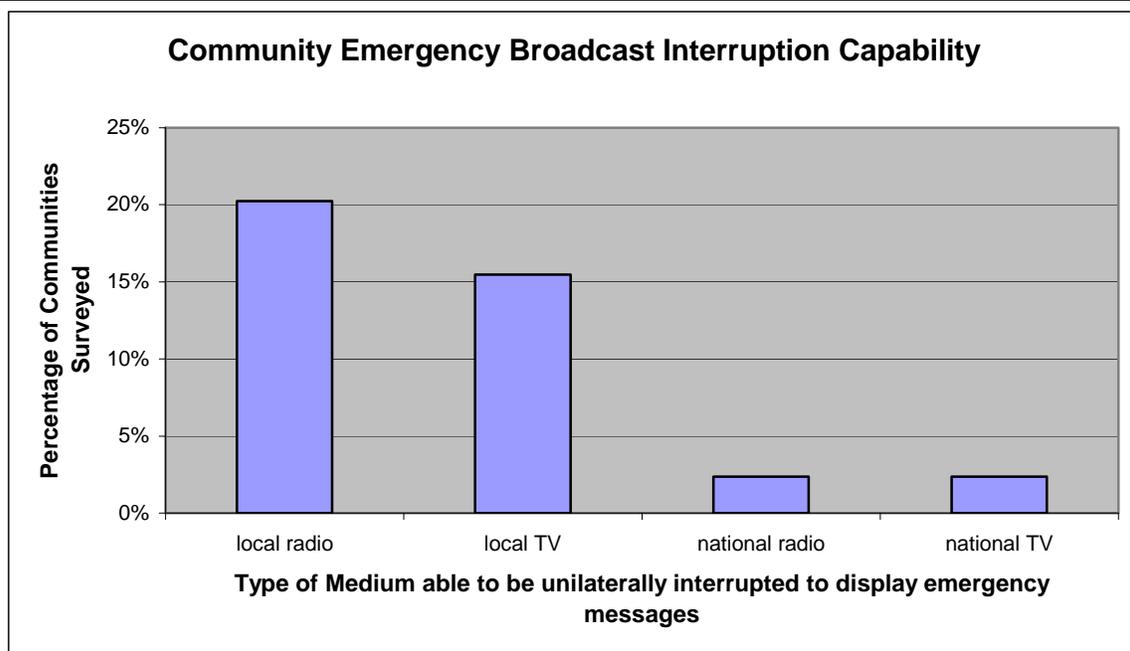
5. Community Awareness²¹⁰

SURVEY RESULTS

5	Community Awareness	Percentage	No. of Community Responses
5a	Does your local government have a program in place to educate its citizens on what to do in case of a disaster?		
	Yes	77%	71
	No	22%	20
1a	FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS		
	Does your community have the unilateral ability to interrupt television and radio broadcasts in order to transmit emergency-related updates or instructions?		
	Yes	23%	19
	local radio	20%	17
	local TV	15%	13
	national radio	2%	2
	national TV	2%	2

²¹⁰ Questions 5A and follow-up questions 1A and 1B form the basis for this section. The original questions regarding emergency public communications, Question 5B and 5C were disregarded due to the greater precision in the follow-up responses 1A and 1B.

FINDINGS OF 2007 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SURVEY



	No, not unilaterally, media cooperation is needed	76%	64
	No, this is not necessary for my community	1%	1
1b	If yes, please indicate if the authority to unilaterally interrupt radio and television broadcasts has been officially granted to your community and through which mechanism:		
	Provincial Legislation	6%	5
	Local Legislation	1%	1
	Other: Please elaborate	12%	10
	No official authority needed	7%	6

FINDINGS

Our survey touched on two aspects of a community's capability to communicate with the public: proactive and reactive emergency communications.

Proactive emergency communication is what the public has been told *before* an emergency. Do members of the general public know if there are designated shelters in the event of a tornado? Does the average person in a municipality know what basic supplies/plans they will need to keep their family safe in the event of a flood?

- **Question 5A:** We found that the majority of municipalities (77%) have some mechanism in place to proactively inform their public what they should do in case of an emergency.

The second type of emergency communication is reactive – it is needed in a situation where a disaster is impending or is occurring and emergency officials need the public to seek shelter immediately or take other specific action. A particularly important type of reactive emergency communication are emergency public broadcast systems – systems designed to override all television broadcasts during an emergency and display emergency messages to citizens.

In reality, very few municipalities have the power to do this – a topic explored in Problem 7: Emergency Public Communications. The Committee believes the most optimal system would be one that allows emergency managers *unilaterally interrupt* local, national or international television and radio broadcasts.

- **Follow Up Questions 1A and 1B:** From responses to these questions, the Committee found that fewer than a quarter (23%) of municipalities have the ability to *unilaterally interrupt* television or radio broadcasts to transmit emergency messages. Of these 19 communities, only 2 communities – Richmond, BC and Peterborough, Ontario – say they have the ability to interrupt local and national radio/TV broadcasts.
- 76% of surveyed municipalities indicate that they have gained the *consent* of local television stations to broadcast emergency messages. However, this means the control of the medium is with the broadcaster, not the EMO.

FINDINGS OF 2007 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SURVEY

6. First Responder Communications & Training

SURVEY RESULTS

6	First Responders	Percentage	No. of Community Responses
6a	Do the first responders in your community have interoperable communications systems?		
	Yes	62%	57
	No	38%	35
	if yes, are the systems based on federal standards?		
	Yes	36%	33
	No	17%	16
6b	Are your communications systems interoperable with all departments and agencies in your province, other levels of government, and U.S. authorities where applicable?		
	Yes	17%	16
	No	66%	61
6c	Does your community have the capacity to manage a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear or Explosive (CBRNE) incident?		
	Yes	47%	43
	No	50%	46
6d	Does your community have the capacity to manage a cyber attack?		
	Yes	27%	25
	No	60%	55

6e	Have the emergency management personnel in your city received training at the Canadian Emergency Management College?		
	Yes	58%	53
	No	38%	35
	Is the amount of training received sufficient?		
	Yes	18%	17
	No	52%	48

FINDINGS

In this section of the survey, the Committee dealt with issues specifically related to perceptions surrounding the quality of the communications equipment, first responder ability to cope with CBRNE (Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear Explosive) incidents and cyber attacks, and the training of first responders.

- Regarding first responder communication (**Questions 6A and 6B**) the Committee’s key finding is that the majority of communities have interoperable municipal communications (62% of municipalities), but very few are interoperable with provincial and federal levels (17%).
- Regarding CBRNE, the responses to **Question 6C** show that almost half (47%) of communities have some in-house capacity to manage a CBRNE event. This is an improvement from our 2003 survey, in which 82% of responding municipalities “would rely on federal and provincial aid in the event of a CBRN emergency.”²¹¹

The main centre of emergency management training in Canada is the Canadian Emergency Management College (CEMC) located in Ottawa and operated by Public Safety Canada. Originally established in 1954 to provide programs in wartime civil defence planning, the College provides training

²¹¹ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada’s Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 96.

FINDINGS OF 2007 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SURVEY

for emergency management officials from all levels of government across the country.²¹²

- The key finding for responses to **Question 6E** is that the vast majority of municipalities feel that there needs to be more CEMC training. While 58% of surveyed municipalities said that emergency management personnel in their community have trained at the CEMC, only 18% think this amount of training is sufficient.

Many emergency managers attribute a lack of sufficient training at CEMC to insufficient funding, internal and external, allocated specifically for training. As Randy Crashley, Emergency Measures Coordinator and Deputy Fire Chief of Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan wrote in his community's survey response:

“Funding for additional training at the local level would be an improvement. Communities want and need to practise their disaster plan. However, budgets are restricted and agencies are reluctant to cover costs for their organization. Additional funding at the local area would alleviate this.”

Others blame training shortages on inadequate eligibility criteria for training at the CEMC. As Brian Cornforth, Chief of Fire and Emergency Services of Lethbridge, Alberta wrote in his community's survey response:

“Funding for training is limited to communities under 20,000 people. We don't qualify. And yet if there was an allowance for a wide spread [emergency], people would come to us for help because we're a regional capital.”

In his community's survey response, Bruce Burrell, Fire Chief and Head Disaster Services for Calgary, Alberta pointed to disparities that exist in the allocation of training seats to municipalities:

“Capacity for City of Calgary staff to attend training at CEMC does not meet demand. The current process of large municipalities applying for vacancies/seats for courses through the provincial EMO is not working. There is disparity between the allocation of seats between small communities and large urban centres. Despite the creation of the Granville courses (specifically designed for small communities), small communities in Alberta continue to be allocated seats

²¹² Public Safety Canada, “About the College”, January 25, 2008. Available at <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/em/cemc/03abt-eng.aspx>

in the Collegeville course designed for these large urban centres, thereby displacing available opportunities for larger municipalities such as Calgary.”

7. Role of the Canadian Forces

SURVEY RESULTS

7	ROLE OF THE CANADIAN FORCES	Percentage	No. of Community Responses
7a	Is there an expectation in your community that the Canadian Forces will provide assistance to your community in the event of an emergency or disaster if necessary?		
	Yes	85%	78
	No	14%	13
7b	Are community leaders or is your communities emergency management organization/ or person(s) charged with emergency preparedness aware of the existence of the Canadian Forces Canada Command?		
	Yes	75%	69
	No	24%	22
	if yes, has your community liaised with Canada Command about emergency preparedness?		
	Yes	46%	42
	No	24%	22
7c	Is there a Canadian Forces Reserve Unit located in your community?		
	Yes	61%	56
	No	30%	28
	if yes, does your EMC aware of role provided by Reserves in an emergency?		
	Yes	45%	41
	No	15%	14

FINDINGS OF 2007 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SURVEY

	if yes, as CF Reserves been included in emergency planning process?		
	Yes	32%	29
	No	22%	20

FINDINGS

When reviewing the “Role of the Canadian Forces” section of the survey, the Committee’s key finding was that while there was generally a high awareness of the role the Canadian Forces play during emergency management and response, communications between cities and the military could be improved.

- Responses to **Question 7B** indicate that 75% of municipalities were aware of the existence of Canadian Forces Canada Command, the entity in charge of all domestic force operations. Yet, only 46% have actually liaised with Canada Command.
- From answers to **Question 7C**, 61% of municipalities told us there is a Canadian Forces Reserve unit located in their community, but only 45% are aware of the role provided by the Reserves in an emergency. Even fewer (32%) have involved the Canadian Forces Reserve in emergency planning.

The lack of time and resources were among the reasons that more municipalities have not been in contact with the Forces regarding emergency planning.

Elaborating on why his municipality has not liaised with the Canadian Forces, Scott C. Tegler, Fire Chief & Community Emergency Management Coordinator for the City of Woodstock wrote in his community’s survey response:

[I] have not had the opportunity. In most municipalities, including mine, the role of Emergency Management Coordinator has been the addition of a full time job on top of the existing full time job I was currently responsible. Therefore, many of these details or regular duties fall by the [wayside], as there is not enough time in the day to appropriately accomplish. Some municipalities have created a full or part time position to directly deal with this position locally, however most have

not. There was no direct funding afforded municipalities to help offset the compensation for municipalities to hire such, and those who had it added to their portfolio, quite frankly are getting burnt out with all of the demands, and with trying to fulfill requirements through their own personal values.

8. Heavy Urban Search and Rescue

SURVEY RESULTS

8	HEAVY URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE (HUSAR)	Percentage	No. of Community Responses
8a	Does your community have HUSAR capability?		
	Yes	13%	12
	No	82%	75
	Developing ²¹³	3%	3
8b	At what level is your HUSAR deployment capability ranked?		
	Category 1	17%	2
	Category 2	8%	1
	Category 3	33%	4
	Category 4	8%	1
	Category 5	17%	2
	No defined category ²¹⁴	17%	2
8d	Are there agreements in place for your HUSAR team to provide regional support in case of disasters or emergencies?		
	Yes	67%	8
	No	25%	3
8e	Is the goal of your HUSAR program to reach Category 5 deployment capability?		
	Yes	17%	2
	No	58%	7

²¹³ The choice “developing” was originally not available as a survey option, but upon closer examination of responses it was concluded that Ottawa, Thunder Bay and Victoriaville were developing a capability that was not fully operational.

²¹⁴ The choice “no defined category” was originally not available as a survey option, but two municipalities, Halifax and Winnipeg, did not specify a deployment category for their USAR team.

FINDINGS OF 2007 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SURVEY

8f	Whose responsibility should it be to provide funding for HUSAR? (more than one can be selected)		
	Municipal	1%	1
	Provincial	20%	18
	Federal	26%	24
	all three	36%	33

FINDINGS

As noted earlier in the body of this report, there are 5 national and federally supported Heavy Urban Search and Rescue (HUSAR) teams. On top of this, there are a number of small Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams with varying capabilities. USAR is split into 5 deployment categories, from category 1 to 5. Category 1 is only capable of local deployment and Category 5 being able to deploy internationally. Category 5 teams are considered HUSAR.

- **Question 8A:** 82% of municipalities do not have an USAR team based in their community. At the time the survey was conducted (spring to fall 2007); Ottawa, Thunder Bay and Victoriaville were developing USAR capability.
- Responses to **Question 8D** indicate that 12 of the communities we surveyed have some Urban Search and Rescue capability. Of these teams, 8 have agreements in place for their team to provide regional support to neighbouring municipalities.

Of the 12 USAR teams, only 2 responded that their goal was to reach Category 5 deployment capability.

9. Critical Infrastructure Protection

SURVEY RESULTS

9	CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION (CIP)	Percentage	No. of Community Responses
9a	Has your community identified critical infrastructure within its boundaries?		
	Yes	84%	77
	No	12%	11
9b	Does your community have a plan in place to protect critical infrastructure?		
	Yes	58%	53
	No	37%	34
9c	Has the federal government identified federal critical infrastructure in your community?		
	Yes	16%	15
	No	61%	56
	if yes, is your community responsible for protecting federal critical infrastructure?		
	Yes	10%	9
	No	20%	18
9d	Has your provincial government identified provincial critical infrastructure in your community?		
	Yes	34%	31
	No	40%	37
	if yes, is your community responsible for protecting provincial critical infrastructure?		
	Yes	16%	15
	No	24%	22

FINDINGS OF 2007 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SURVEY

FINDINGS

A high percentage of municipalities have identified critical infrastructure as part of their general risk analysis. In many cases, critical infrastructure is built into a community's standardized risk assessment. As Barry Manuel, Emergency Measures Coordinator for the City of Halifax wrote in his community's survey response: "The 2007 HRVA [a standardized risk assessment tool] will be used to determine ownership of critical infrastructure, its relationship to the municipality and its citizens and the pathway needed to ensure its continued provision."

- Responses to **Questions 9A and 9B** indicate a disparity between identifying and protecting critical infrastructure. While 84% of municipalities have identified critical infrastructure within their boundaries, 58% of communities have a plan in place to protect it.
- Responses to **Question 9C and 9D** show low percentages of municipalities have provincial or federal critical infrastructure identified in their community (16% and 34% respectively).

While one reason may be that only a relatively low percentage of municipalities contain federal or provincial critical infrastructure, a closer examination of survey responses from large cities (which house important regional infrastructure) such as Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Edmonton and Calgary shows that federal/provincial engagement regarding identification of infrastructure has been inconsistent.

Moreover, many municipalities responded that they simply did not know whether the federal/provincial governments had identified critical infrastructure in their city or town, and just neglected to tell them.

Appendix B: Complete List of New and Old Committee Recommendations

Problem 1: Lack of Emergency Management

2008 Recommendations

1. The Committee recommends that Public Safety Canada table an annual report in Parliament documenting the Business Continuity Plan of each government department and agency, and provide evidence whether they have been implemented and tested, and that the results be made available publicly.
2. The Committee recommends that if Public Safety Canada is unable or unwilling to table such a report, a third party national security auditor be appointed to do so.

2004 Recommendations

- The Committee recommended that Public Safety Canada conduct evaluations to ensure that all federal departments and agencies are able to continue to operate during a crisis and that their preparedness plans are in effect.²¹⁵

Problem 2: Use of the Canadian Forces for Domestic Emergencies

2008 Recommendations

No new recommendations

²¹⁵ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 64. See recommendation 17 A - This sub-recommendation is a part of a larger recommendation that is dealt with below. The sub-recommendation is separated here because of its importance.

NEW AND OLD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

2004 Recommendations

- The Committee recommended that the Canadian Forces should enhance their capabilities to respond to national emergencies by:
 - Ensuring that the Regular Forces are equipped and trained to deal with significant emergencies in Canada and that they are involved in regional emergency planning;
 - Expanding the role of the Militia to be a civil defence force capable of quickly aiding local authorities in the event of a national emergency;
 - Involving the Militia in emergency planning and training in conjunction with municipalities across the country;
 - Equipping and training the Militia for emergency preparedness operations.
- The Committee recommended that the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness (PSEPC) should:
 - Include the CF Militia in the national inventory of emergency preparedness resources; and provide first responders with details of the Militia's assets and capabilities.²¹⁶

Problem 3: Hidden Emergency Caches

2008 Recommendations

3. The Committee recommends that for perishable supplies, Health Canada develop a tracking system, accessible to all orders of government, which would identify available providers throughout the provinces/territories.

²¹⁶ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 35, 47. See recommendation #3 and recommendations #10, 11.

4. The Committee recommends that regular live exercises, and a budget to support the live exercises, are established in order to test the new emergency supply tracking system.
5. The Committee recommends that First Responders have a greater say in the stockpiling of non-perishable emergency supplies, including where the inventories are held, whether there is duplication and how they are accessed.

2004 Recommendations

- The Committee recommended that Health Canada overhaul the way it administers and manages the emergency caches it controls, with the aim of more efficiently and effectively aiding first responder agencies to help Canadians across the country. The overhaul should ensure, among other things, that local officials are:
 - Made aware of the locations of any caches in their vicinity;
 - Advised how to access the caches in emergencies;
 - Given a role in determining caches' contents; and
 - Encouraged to include the caches in their planning and training.²¹⁷

Problem 4: Lack of Funding for Equipment & Training

2008 Recommendations

6. The Committee recommends that the government should establish an evergreening fund dedicated to:
 - a. Maintaining current Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) and CBRNE capabilities, including equipment purchase, maintenance,

²¹⁷ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 35. See recommendation #5.

NEW AND OLD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

and training for all relevant emergency workers, based on a negotiated funding formula;

- b. Allow smaller municipalities attempting to set up USAR facilities to receive funding;
7. The Committee recommends that the government design a HUSAR kit that would fit into a Hercules aircraft (or C-17) enabling the Canadian Forces to transport USAR teams to emergency sites across Canada, or internationally, in a timely manner.

2004 Recommendations

- The federal government should provide four additional years of funding (\$5 million per year) for the purchase of CBRN protection equipment.²¹⁸

Problem 5: Poor Collaboration Among Governments

2008 Recommendations

8. The Committee recommends that the federal government identify municipal emergency officers across the country who require security clearances to receive federal information, ensure that they are checked out and given security clearances if they pass.
9. The Committee recommends that Public Safety Canada communicate directly with municipal emergency officers at any time that the department has information or other resources that could improve the emergency response capacity of these municipalities.
10. The Committee recommends that the federal government conduct a “value for money” audit of Public Safety Canada.

²¹⁸ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 36. See recommendation #6.

2004 Recommendations

The Committee recommended that:

- Public Safety Canada negotiate memoranda of understanding between the federal government and the provinces and territories that detail inter-jurisdictional responsibilities for both emergency preparedness and response.²¹⁹
- The Minister of Public Safety Canada ensure that new effective data-sharing protocols and mutual assistance agreements between federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments be implemented.²²⁰

Problem 6(a): Lessons Learned Not Remembered

2008 Recommendations

None

2004 Recommendations

- Public Safety Canada must structure its “lessons learned” archive so that it is:
 - Up to date and historically deep; and
 - Accessible and helpful to First Responders.²²¹
- Public Safety Canada should act as a clearinghouse to assist other orders of government by distributing provincial / territorial and municipal “lessons learned” to other jurisdictions as required; and
- Public Safety Canada should also prepare and publish a preliminary public report within sixty (60) days of the emergency followed by a

²¹⁹ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 40. See recommendation #9.

²²⁰ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 77. See recommendations #18 B.

²²¹ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 36. See recommendation #7.

NEW AND OLD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

formal public report within one year of any national emergency outlining “lessons learned” from the emergency and various responses to it.²²²

Problem 6(b): Lack of Leadership on Best Practices

2008 Recommendations

11. The Committee recommends that the government should call for tenders from Canadian universities and institutions involved in dealing with emergencies and transfer funding from Public Safety Canada to one such institution that will:
 - a. Develop and maintain an online catalogue of “lessons learned” and “best practices” from past emergencies in Canada and around the world and share that catalogue with all Canadian first responders;
 - b. Provide any Canadian municipality requesting it an audit of that municipality’s emergency measures response capacity;
 - c. Report to Parliament annually on any deficiencies it the institution might find in Canada’s system of preparing for, and responding to, emergencies;
 - d. Formulate a protocol to consult the emergency managers of different orders of governments & first responders for the purposes of determine how to best assemble national standards for best practices.

12. The Committee recommends that after each meeting of the Domestic Group on Emergency Management, the government should compile a list on topics discussed, information shared, and to convert this list into materials (i.e. workbooks, CDs, web content) that can be disseminated and used by first responders across the country.

²²² Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada’s Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 78. See recommendation #18 G (i).

2004 Recommendations

- The Committee recommended that the Minister and the Department of Public Safety Canada:
 - Ensure that Canadian communities are fully informed about the availability of training programs and other resources to help them prepare to respond to emergencies;
 - Facilitate and finance a peer review system among emergency managers and first responders to ensure that “best practices” are being implemented and to foster greater interoperability;
 - Ensure that all agreements to provide funds to provincial and territorial governments disclose what percentage of those funds will be given to first responders in the municipalities;
 - Prepare and publish reports annually to Parliament on its activities. This report should emphasize the measures that Public Safety Canada has taken to upgrade Canada’s capacity to respond to national emergencies and the perceived shortfalls between assets and capabilities of first responders;²²³
 - Public Safety Canada, in cooperation with municipal emergency response units, provincial and federal governments, and relevant federal departments, develop a set of “best practices” for potential natural and man-made disasters.²²⁴ (March 2004)

Problem 7: Emergency Public Communications

2008 Recommendations

None

²²³ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada’s Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 77, 78. See recommendations #18 A, D, E, F, and Recommendation G(ii). Parts B, C, and G(i) of recommendation #18 are addressed elsewhere in this chapter.

²²⁴ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada’s Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 77. See recommendation #18 C.

NEW AND OLD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

2004 Recommendations

- In order to ensure that authorities have the power and the capability to interrupt radio and television broadcasts during emergencies:
 - Public Safety Canada design standards for the establishment of emergency public warning systems for all provinces and territories;
 - the Governor in Council, by order, direct the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to introduce such regulations as necessary to ensure that all public and private broadcasters are required to cooperate in the establishment of provincial / territorial and national public warning systems; and
 - a national emergency website with links to provincial and territorial emergency websites be established so that emergency information and instructions can quickly be communicated via the Internet during a national emergency.
- Public Safety Canada encourage the installation of a system like “Reverse 911®” in all municipalities, funding at least a third of the cost, with remaining costs to be divided between the provinces / territories and municipalities.²²⁵

Problem 8: Lack of First Responder Interoperability

2008 Recommendations

13. The Committee recommends that Public Safety Canada make first responder interoperability a specific item of discussion for the next iterations of the FPT Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Emergency Management.

²²⁵ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 63. See recommendations #12 and 13.

14. The Committee recommends that Public Safety Canada involve provincial and municipal partners in the development of its National Public Safety Radio Communications Strategy within two years (by 2010).

2004 Recommendations

- Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness (PSEPC) should enter into negotiations to equip the entire first responder community nationwide with handheld communications devices, with the federal government funding at least a third of the cost, with remaining costs to be divided between the provinces / territories and municipalities.
- Each order of government should create the capacity to communicate with its first responders, within itself and with other orders of government. All systems should have wireless back-ups.²²⁶

Problem 9: First Responders Ignored

2008 Recommendations

15. The Committee recommends that in hiring new personnel for the formation and implementation of emergency management policy, Public Safety Canada give first priority to persons with field experience in the first responder community.
16. The Committee recommends that “hands on” experience with first responders be required as training for all current Public Safety Canada employees who work in the area of emergency management policy in Canada, starting with the Deputy Minister and working down the management hierarchy.

²²⁶ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 63-64. See recommendations #15.

NEW AND OLD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

2004 Recommendations

- The Committee recommended that Public Safety Canada develop a greater sensitivity to the differing needs of the First Responders in communities across Canada.
- The Committee recommended that the Minister of Public Safety Canada give direction to Public Safety Canada to restructure the national emergency preparedness system so that local concerns and needs form the core of preparedness planning and structures.²²⁷

Problem 10: Poor Federal Leadership on Critical Infrastructure Protection

2008 Recommendations

17. The Committee recommends that Public Safety Canada share “lessons learned” from its National Exercise Program with First Responders throughout the country.
18. The Committee recommends the re-instatement of Natural Resources Canada’s Classified Briefings for Energy Sector Stakeholders.
19. The Committee recommends that models similar to Natural Resources Canada’s Classified Briefings for Energy Sector Stakeholders be introduced throughout the 10 Critical Infrastructure Sectors.
20. The Committee recommends the release of the National Critical Infrastructure Protection Strategy by the end of 2008.

2004 Recommendations

- The Committee recommended that the Public Safety Canada be required to:

²²⁷ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada’s Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 64. See Recommendation #16.

- compile and maintain in cooperation with every municipality in Canada lists of the perceived vulnerabilities, emergency response assets, and shortfalls in assets and capabilities;
- hold meetings with provincial / territorial counterparts to discuss the deficiencies revealed as a result of the recommendation above; and
- conduct national emergency exercises in cooperation with other orders of government and prepare analyses on the “lessons learned”.²²⁸

Problem 11: Emergency Ad Hockery

2008 Recommendations

21. The Committee recommends that Public Safety Canada complete and release the National Emergency Response System (NERS) not later than March 2009.
22. The Committee recommends that the Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada publicly release the National Health Incident Management System (NHIMS) not later than March 2009.
23. The Committee recommends that the Public Health Agency of Canada treat the 2008 Auditor General’s report with the highest priority and that the agency report to Parliament as each recommendation is implemented. (For full list of the Auditor General’s 2008 recommendations, see Appendix C).
24. The Committee recommends the Auditor General conduct a follow-up to the 2005 audit of emergency preparedness, and in particular, examine and assess the status of NERS.

²²⁸ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada’s Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 64. See recommendations #17 B, C and D.

NEW AND OLD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

2004 Recommendations

- The Committee recommended Health Canada develop a national plan to counteract potential outbreaks of anthrax, plague, botulism, tularemia and hemorrhagic fever and that it report to Parliament and the public by 31 March 2005 that this is completed.²²⁹

Problem 12(b): Policing During Emergencies

2008 Recommendations

25. The Committee recommends that the representatives of the federal, provincial and local police forces across Canada conduct national discussions in order to further clarify roles and responsibilities with regard to national security and emergency management.
26. The Committee recommends that there be an increase in the number of police officers to reach England's level – approximately 8,000 more police, consistent with what the Committee has been proposing with regard to the RCMP (5,000 to 7,000 additional members), and with the Government's commitment to an additional 2500 police officers.

No previous recommendations

Problem 12(c): The State of the Mounties Today

2008 Recommendations

27. The Committee's recommends that the Government grant the RCMP separate employer status.
28. The Committee's recommends that the Government fund annual increases to the RCMP budget to permit a growth of at least 700 personnel per year for each of the next 10 years.

²²⁹ Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, *National Emergencies: Canada's Fragile Front Lines – An Upgrade Strategy*, (Ottawa: Senate of Canada, March 2004), pg. 13. See recommendation #1.

29. The Committee's recommends that the RCMP provide a schedule of implementation for each of the recommendations in *The Brown Report*.

30. The Committee's recommends that the RCMP table a quarterly report to Parliament on whatever progress has been made on (a) separate employer status (b) increases in personnel (c) implementation of the various recommendations of *The Brown Report*.

No previous recommendations

Appendix C: List of Auditor General's Recommendations

List of recommendations taken from the *May 2008 Report of the Auditor General, Chapter 5—Surveillance of Infectious Diseases—Public Health Agency of Canada*, pp 32-35.

Recommendation	Response
Strategic directions	
<p>5.22 To ensure effective management of risks posed by existing and emerging infectious diseases, the Public Health Agency of Canada should use public health threat assessments to set objectives and priorities for its national surveillance activities. (5.15–5.21)</p>	<p>The Public Health Agency's response. Agreed. The Agency is assessing, on a daily basis, public health risks to Canadians posed by existing and emerging infectious diseases, which are recorded in its Daily Intelligence Report. The Agency has written its Surveillance Strategy Framework, initiated its implementation process, and is committed to complete its implementation over the next three years. This will include a formalized decision process using health threat risk assessments to address priorities and objectives. The Agency's Integrated Risk Assessment Framework will be in place by December 2009.</p>
<p>5.28 To help clarify its roles and responsibilities, ensure that it receives relevant and timely surveillance information, and ensure that it has adequate legislative and regulatory authorities for the collection, use, and disclosure of public health information, the Public Health Agency of Canada should, with Health Canada, complete the legislative review and, if necessary, should seek the additional authorities for the Agency to carry out surveillance. (5.23–5.27)</p>	<p>Health Canada and the Public Health Agency's response. Agreed. The Agency and Health Canada will continue to work together to develop legislative and regulatory authorities for the collection, use, and disclosure of public health research and surveillance information.</p>

<p>5.33 To improve their ability to anticipate and control zoonotic diseases, the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency should jointly assess the possible risks to human and animal health, clarify how the responsibilities will be divided, and act on joint surveillance objectives and priorities. (5.29–5.32)</p>	<p>The agencies’ response. Agreed. To further ensure collaboration and coordination, including clarification of roles and responsibilities for issues surrounding zoonotic diseases and the potential impacts on human and animal health, the Public Health Agency, CFIA, and Health Canada are currently finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding. In addition, the Public Health Agency addresses issues related to diseases transmitted via food and water through the Foodborne and Waterborne Issue Group, a federal-provincial-territorial committee of the Public Health Network. Also, a newly established Issue Group of the Communicable Disease Expert Group has been created to deal with issues related to animal-to-human infections that are not typically transmitted through food and water. This federal-provincial-territorial committee, as well as forums such as the annual National West Nile Virus and Other Non-Enteric Zoonotic Diseases meetings, provides the Public Health Agency a platform for discussion with stakeholders and the CFIA.</p> <p>CFIA and the Public Health Agency will implement a risk assessment by spring 2009 and enhancements will be made to the surveillance zoonotic alert module.</p>
<p>Existing infectious diseases</p>	
<p>5.39 The Public Health Agency of Canada should establish data-sharing agreements to ensure that it receives timely, complete, and accurate surveillance information from all provinces and territories. In collaboration with its partners, the Agency should set timelines for putting these agreements in place. (5.34–5.38)</p>	<p>The Public Health Agency’s response. Agreed. The Agency recognizes the importance of sharing data in a timely, complete, and accurate fashion. Over the last three years, the Agency has worked with provinces and territories to put in place data-sharing agreements. It also participated in a number of provincial and territorial forums to address issues of surveillance information, such as the Public Health Network and the Committee of Chief Medical Officers of Health.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Agency is in the process of</p>

AUDITOR GENERAL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

	<p>developing a Privacy Framework for the management of privacy issues, such as record information sharing and managed information sharing agreements, with an expected completion date of March 2009. During the 2008–09 fiscal year, the Agency will continue its partnership work with provinces and territories on information sharing and complete the portion of data-sharing agreements that is under its jurisdiction, while engaging provincial and territorial partners to complete their respective portions.</p>
<p>5.43 The Public Health Agency of Canada should work with its partners to implement agreed-on standards for the data it receives from provinces and territories. Steps should include finalizing agreements with all provinces and territories on the data to be provided for each infectious disease. (5.40–5.42)</p>	<p>Agreed. The standards for notifiable diseases were agreed to and signed by one province as of September 2007. The Agency will continue working toward finalizing more of these data-sharing agreements with provinces and territories. Additionally, the revised case definitions for notifiable diseases will be finalized and published by December 2009.</p>
<p>5.46 To ensure adequate data quality to support public health actions, the Public Health Agency of Canada should put in place the necessary procedures for assessing and documenting its data quality, and should work with its partners to address deficiencies. (5.44–5.45)</p>	<p>Agreed. The Agency has been working and will continue its work to formalize the data quality checks that it has already undertaken. A data quality process has been piloted within the Agency and is expected to be completed by March 2009. As outlined in the Surveillance Strategy Framework, the Agency will continue to strengthen its existing activities to formalize procedures internally, and will work with partners to address any deficiencies that become apparent.</p>
<p>5.50 The Public Health Agency of Canada should periodically evaluate its surveillance systems to ensure that they are working as intended, and it should report the results publicly. (5.47–5.49)</p>	<p>Agreed. During the 2008–09 fiscal year, the Agency will finalize and implement the existing Evaluation Framework for Surveillance Systems throughout the organization. This Framework will be used to perform regular evaluations of surveillance systems.</p>
<p>5.51 To regularly measure the performance of its surveillance systems, the Public Health Agency of Canada should establish indicators</p>	<p>Agreed. In conjunction with current work being done on revising and detailing its Strategic Outcome and Program Activities, the Agency will work to establish required</p>

<p>with targets and report the results against those targets. (5.47–5.49)</p>	<p>indicators and subsequent reporting in the 2009–10 fiscal year.</p>
<p>5.54 To ensure that its surveillance systems for HIV, the West Nile virus, and the influenza virus are best meeting the needs of the users, the Public Health Agency of Canada should systematically assess and document the user needs. (5.52–5.53)</p>	<p>Agreed. The Agency will implement a user needs assessment program for surveillance systems by December 2008.</p>
<p>New international commitments</p>	
<p>5.88 To ensure that it can meet its obligations under the <i>International Health Regulations</i>, the Public Health Agency of Canada should ensure that its internal systems for managing information about significant public health events are comprehensive and well-documented. (5.74–5.87)</p>	<p>Agreed. In the 2008–09 and 2009–10 fiscal years, the Agency will formalize comprehensive and well-documented internal systems for managing information during a significant public health event. This will be accomplished through strengthening existing daily briefings of executive management, and responsible officers of data systems laboratories, and relevant surveillance systems.</p>
<p>5.89 To ensure that it can meet its obligations under the <i>International Health Regulations</i>, the Public Health Agency of Canada should work with its partners to establish an action plan with clear and realistic deadlines for implementing the memorandum of understanding on the sharing of information during a public health emergency. (5.74–5.87)</p>	<p>Agreed. The Agency continues to work on a comprehensive plan to ensure that it meets its obligations under the <i>International Health Regulations</i>. This includes finalizing the Memorandum of Understanding on Information Sharing during a Public Health Emergency developed by the Public Health Network’s Surveillance and Information Expert Group, and, during the 2008–09 fiscal year, supporting and participating in the collaborative action plan for its implementation.</p> <p>Also, as required by the World Health Organization, the Agency will work with partners to develop a comprehensive action plan by December 2009 that will outline how Canada intends to meet its obligations under the Regulations.</p> <p>The Agency believes that Canada’s public health systems are in a much better position than in 2003 to deal with an infectious disease threat of national importance. For example, the</p>

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	<p>agreements that have been concluded between the Agency and its partners since 2004 and the experience of events that have occurred since SARS demonstrate the ability of the Agency and its partners nationally and internationally to address public health threats effectively.</p>
<p>5.91 To comply with Treasury Board Secretariat requirements and aid negotiations with the provinces and territories, the Public Health Agency of Canada should take steps to complete a privacy impact assessment that covers the information-sharing requirements outlined in the memorandum of understanding on the sharing of information during a public health emergency. (5.90)</p>	

Appendix D: Infectious Diseases Threats

Infectious Disease Threats

Dr Frank Plummer, PhD

Scientific Director General

Public Health Agency of Canada
NATIONAL MICROBIOLOGY LABORATORY

INFECTIOUS DISEASES THREATS

Agent	Disease Syndrome	Mortality	Specific Prevention/ Treatment	Methods of dissemination	Possible human to human transmission	Area of endemicity	Research on weaponization in the past	Used as a bioweapon in the past
Category A								
Anthrax (Bacillus anthracis)	Pneumonia and skin infection	Approaching 100%	Preventable and treatable with antibiotics. Vaccine available for the military	Aerosol	no	Ubiquitous in soil including in Canada	yes	yes, dissemination of weaponized anthrax via the US postal system in 2001
Botulism (Clostridium botulinum toxin)	Paralytic neurologic syndrome	10%	Treatment is primarily supportive (respiratory support)	Food or water	no	Ubiquitous in the environment including in Canada	yes	no
Plague (Yersinia pestis)	Pneumonia	Approaching 100%	Preventable and treatable with antibiotics. Vaccines available for the military	Flea bites, aerosol	yes	Worldwide in rodents	yes	yes, used by the Japanese in China during World War II and in medieval times
Smallpox (Variola major)	Fever, severe pustular rash, multiple organ failure	30% in the era when smallpox was circulating and the population	Vaccine available (stockpiled) but no specific treatment	Aerosol, trans-cutaneous	yes	Only known to exist in 2 laboratories in the US and Russia	yes	yes, used by English colonists against First Nations in

APPENDIX D

		was highly vaccinated							North America
Agent	Disease Syndrome	Mortality	Specific Prevention/ Treatment	Methods of dissemination	Possible human to human transmission	Area of endemicity	Research on weaponization in the past	Used as a bioweapon in the past	
Tularemia (<i>Francisella tularensis</i>)	Pneumonia	<2%	Preventable and treatable with antibiotics	Aerosol, transcutaneous	no	Ubiquitous in nature including in Canada	yes	no	
Viral hemorrhagic fevers (e.g., Ebola, Marburg, Lassa, Machupo viruses)	Fever, multiple organ failure, bleeding	50-80%	No specific treatment or vaccines	Transcutaneous, mucous membrane exposure	yes	Endemic in animals (bats and others) in Africa, Asia and South America	yes	no	
Category B									
Brucellosis (<i>Brucella</i> species)	Recurrent fever and involvement of multiple organs	Less than 2%	Preventable and treatable with antibiotics.	Aerosol, consumption of cheese or milk	no	Ubiquitous in ruminant animals including in Canada	yes	no	
Epsilon toxin of <i>Clostridium perfringens</i>	Diarrhea, abdominal cramping	Rare	No specific treatment	Food or water, aerosol	no	Ubiquitous throughout the world including in Canada	no	no	

INFECTIOUS DISEASES THREATS

Agent	Disease Syndrome	Mortality	Treatment	Methods of dissemination	Possible human to human transmission	Area of endemicity	Research on weaponization in the past	Used as a bioweapon in the past
Food safety threats (e.g., <i>Salmonella</i> , <i>Escherichia coli</i> O157:H7, <i>Shigella</i>)	Mild to severe diarrhea, rarely kidney failure	Unusual	No specific treatment for most	Food and water		Ubiquitous in food animals and soil	no	yes, deliberate contamination of a salad bar with <i>Salmonella</i> by an Oregon religious sect
Glanders (<i>Burkholderia mallei</i>)	Skin infection, pneumonia, bloodstream infection	High for pulmonary and blood stream infection	Preventable and treatable with antibiotics.	Aerosol, trans-cutaneous	rarely	Endemic in horses in Africa, Asia, Middle East, Central and South America	Yes	Yes, used in World War I by the Germans against Allied horses
Melioidosis (<i>Burkholderia pseudomallei</i>)	Skin infection, pneumonia, bloodstream infection	Bloodstream infections are occasionally fatal	Preventable and treatable with antibiotics.	Ingestion of contaminated water, aerosol,	rarely	Endemic in soil and water in South East Asia	no	no
Psittacosis (<i>Chlamydia psittaci</i>)	Pneumonia	Mortality is relative low	Preventable and treatable with antibiotics.	Aerosol	no	Ubiquitous in wild and domestic birds world wide	no	no

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Agent	Disease Syndrome	Mortality	Treatment	Methods of dissemination	Possible human to human transmission	Area of endemicity	Research on weaponization in the past	Used as a bioweapon in the past
Q fever (<i>Coxiella burnetii</i>)	Pneumonia	Mortality is relatively rare	Preventable and treatable with antibiotics.	Aerosol	rarely	Endemic world wide in ruminants including in Canada	no	no
Ricin toxin from <i>Ricinus communis</i> (castor beans)	Respiratory failure, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea	Approaching 100%	No specific treatment	Aerosol, ingestion of contaminated food or water, trans-cutaneous	no	Castor beans are grown world wide	yes	Yes, used to poison a Bulgarian dissident in 1978. The UK detected a ricin manufacturing plot by an Islamic terrorist cell in 2003. There have been several ricin containing letters in the US
Staphylococcal enterotoxin B	Severe nausea and vomiting	Very rare	No specific treatment	Ingestion of contaminated food	no	Ubiquitous throughout the world including in Canada	no	no

INFECTIOUS DISEASES THREATS

Agent	Disease Syndrome	Mortality	Treatment	Methods of dissemination	Possible human to human transmission	Area of endemicity	Research on weaponization in the past	Used as a bioweapon in the past
Typhus fever (<i>Rickettsia prowazekii</i>)	Fever, cough, muscle aches and pains, rash,	<5%	Preventable and treatable with antibiotics.	Louse bites, aerosol	no	Endemic in Africa, Central Asia, Central and South America	no	no
Viral encephalitis (alphaviruses [e.g., Venezuelan equine encephalitis, eastern equine encephalitis, western equine encephalitis])	Fever, headache, neurologic symptoms	<5%	No specific treatment	Mosquito bites, aerosol	no	Endemic in North and South America including in Canada	no	no
Water safety threats (e.g., <i>Vibrio cholerae</i> , <i>Cryptosporidium parvum</i>)	Moderate to severe diarrhea	rare		Contaminated water	no	Except for cholera, ubiquitous throughout the world including in Canada	no	no

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Agent	Disease Syndrome	Mortality	Treatment	Methods of dissemination	Possible human to human transmission	Area of endemicity	Research on weaponization in the past	Used as a bioweapon in the past
Category C								
Emerging infectious diseases such as Nipah virus, hantavirus, pandemic influenza	various	aerosol	No specific treatment	Varies with the agent		Available in natural reservoirs (birds, bats, rodents) through out the world	no	no

Appendix E: RCMP Personnel Levels

The following is the Committee’s view of appropriate levels of RCMP personnel, broken down into the different national security issues the Committee has explored in previous reports and recommendations. “Personnel” refers to full time uniformed RCMP officers.

Security File	Current RCMP Staffing Level	Committee’s Proposed Personnel Level	Committee’s Justification for Proposed Personnel Level
Airports	100	600-800	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada increase the size of the RCMP by between 600 and 800 full-time equivalents (FTEs) in order to provide the RCMP with the capacity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Execute a new mandate of oversight and responsibility for security at airports and, ○ Expand its investigative and analytical capabilities at airports within the National Airport System. <p>Source: Canadian Security Guide Book: 2007 Edition: Airports Page 14, Recommendation #A1</p>
Sea Ports	29	1300-1500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada increase the size of the RCMP National Port Enforcement Teams by between 1,300 and 1,500 full-time equivalents (FTEs) in order to provide the RCMP with the capacity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Combat organized crime at the 19 ports in the National Ports System; ○ Prevent and respond to threats to the national security of Canada that originate from Canada’s marine ports; and ○ Increase, through joint force operations with provincial and local police forces, the number of waterside police in marine

APPENDIX E

			<p>ports situated on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway System and on major rivers.</p> <p>Source: Canadian Security Guide Book: 2007 Edition: Seaports Page 24, Recommendation v</p>
Great Lakes	14 (to 30 in 2008)	1200-1400	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada increase the size of the RCMP Marine and Ports Branch by between 1,200 and 1,400 full-time equivalents (FTEs) in order to provide the RCMP with the capacity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide sufficient coverage and patrol capacity to effectively enforce federal statutes on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Seaway (GL/SLS); ○ Gain better situational awareness of activities on the GL/SLS; ○ Maintain interdiction capacity on the GL/SLS on a 24-7 basis; ○ Have the capacity to become an effective partner to the USCG in securing the GL/SLS. <p>Source: Canadian Security Guide Book: 2007 Edition: Coasts Page 43, Recommendation #C9</p>
Land Border	145	2200-2800	<p>This estimate is based on the following calculations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that the existing program of Integrated Border Enforcement Teams needs to grow nationwide and each team needs to expand its investigative and analytical capabilities (approximately 100-120 personnel per IBET to a total of 1500-1800 personnel); • that the RCMP must increase its situational awareness of activity along the border by expanding its use of innovative technologies like UAVs and helicopters (total number of personnel 100-200); and

RCMP PERSONNEL LEVELS

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> that the RCMP must increase its capacity to protect the 8,891 km border with the United States and 24 rail crossings. This includes: providing protection and safety for the CBSA personnel working at Canada's 119 land border crossings, and the 716 maritime facilities serviced by CBSA through strengthening existing IBETs, RCMP detachments and co-location with CBSA (total approx 600-800 personnel).
Total	288	5300-6500	

Appendix F: Canadian Forces Attrition Numbers

The following document was obtained through a Request for Information sent by the Parliamentary Information and Research Service on 27 June 2008 to the Department of National Defence.

The Department of National Defence issued the following reply in July 2008.

The Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence
Request for Information – Recruitment and Attrition Numbers

Question: Please provide the recruitment and attrition numbers for the CF in the current fiscal year (2007-08).

Answer: 31 March 2008 the CF has recruited 6,716 personnel in fiscal year 2007-2008. During that same period the attrition number for the CF was 6,088 personnel. This resulted in a net increase of 628 people.

Appendix G: Glossary of Terms

BCP – Business Continuity Plan
CANCOM – Canada Command (located in DND)
CBRNE – Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive
CEMC – Canadian Emergency Management College (located in PSC)
CEPR – Center for Emergency Preparedness and Response (located in PHAC)
CNS – Community Notification System
EMA – Emergency Management Act
EMO – Emergency Management Organization
EOC – Emergency Operations Centre
FEMA – (United States) Federal Emergency Management Agency
FERP – Federal Emergency Response Plan (located in PSC)
FERS – Federal Emergency Response System (located in PSC)
FTP (or F/T/P) – Federal/Territorial/Provincial
GHSI – Global Health Security Initiative (located in PHAC)
GHSAGLN – Global Health Security Action Group Laboratory Network (located in PHAC)
GOC – Government Operations Centre (located in PSC)
GSP – Government Security Policy
HUSAR – Heavy Urban Search and Rescue
HERT – Health Emergency Response Team (located in PHAC)
ITAC – Integrated Threat Assessment Centre (located in PSC)
JEPP – Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (located in JEPP)
LFRR – Land Force Reserve Restructure (located in DND)
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NED – National Exercise Division (located in PSC)
NCIAP – National Critical Infrastructure Assurance Program (located in PSC)
NOHERT – National Office of Health Emergency Response Teams (located in PHAC)
NERS – National Emergency Response System (located in PSC)
NESS – National Emergency Stockpile System (located in PHAC)
NHIMS – National Health Incident Management System (located in PHAC)
NSP – National Security Policy
MOU – Memorandum of Understanding
OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OERS – Office of Emergency Response Services (located in PHAC)

PS&S – Public Safety and Security
PT (or P/T) – Province and Territories
SARS – Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SOREM – Senior Officials Responsible For Emergency Management
USAR – Urban Search and Rescue

FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS/AGENCIES

CF – Canadian Forces
CSIS – Canadian Security Intelligence Service
CRTC – Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission
DND – Department of National Defence
HC – Health Canada
PHAC – Public Health Agency of Canada
PSC – Public Safety Canada
RCMP – Royal Canadian Mounted Police