

After Action Report and Improvement Plan Summary

Executive Summary

The Calgary Emergency Management Agency (CEMA) is responsible for coordinating The City's response when significant events occur that impact the ability to maintain service delivery. In response to the severe storm in 2020 June, CEMA facilitated an after action and improvement process on 2021 July 13. This summary provides a strategic, outcome-focused overview of the after action report.

The After Action Report and Improvement Plan highlighted several strengths including preparedness, commitment, collaboration and competence. A plan for improvement identified opportunities in the areas of: communications, response, processes and planning, weather alerts and protocols, and emergency management systems integration. Implementation of the plan is underway with all identified improvement areas having been initiated and/or completed.

Primary Strengths of Response

The City ensured the safety of residents during the response and recovery of this event, while continuing provision of critical services. Four primary strengths included:

1. Preparedness: CEMA stewards a comprehensive emergency management system based on a shared understanding of Calgary's risk environment and a commitment to preparing for risks. Standardized training is delivered on a regular basis in order to promote interoperability and ensure a continuous improvement culture. As preparedness is a shared responsibility, CEMA also delivers community outreach programs that prepares citizens for emergencies.
2. Commitment: This event happened on the weekend and the response was largely led by emergency first responders and oncall staff. Commitment on the part of staff to respond as efficiently and effectively as possible limited this event's overall impact to the community.
3. Collaboration: This event presented several challenges and required a synchronized response effort. Implementing recommendations from past learnings into best practice resulted in the timely, effective, and collaborative response to this hailstorm.
4. Competence: The City of Calgary's internal and external agency members and oncall personnel demonstrated a high level of competency and capability in executing escalation functions and emergency management protocols. Staff members acted on the priorities and problems of the event. Ultimately, the City focused on maintaining critical municipal services and everyone worked efficiently and effectively towards quick response and recovery.

Improvement Plan

The opportunities surfaced in the improvement plan have been initiated and in some cases completed. They can be summarized in five areas:

1. Communications
 - a. Review the internal alerting and notification list for The City's business units.
 - b. Evaluate the effectiveness of The City's public crisis communications.
 - c. Survey the effectiveness of the public awareness campaign around severe storm safety.
 - d. Enhance messaging about severe storms to include multiple languages.

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2. Response
 - a. Review the escalation process for City staff.
 - b. Review established responder agency incident command and unified command processes and identify opportunities for further integration during events.
 - c. Integrate severe weather projects into CEMA's regularly scheduled exercises.
3. Processes and Planning
 - a. Develop a corporate severe weather response plan.
 - b. Review The City's safety protocols related to severe storm response.
 - c. Improve CEMA's after action reporting.
 - d. Review business continuity plans.
4. Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) Weather Alerts and Protocols
 - a. Review alerting protocols and frequency of ECCC weather alerts.
 - b. Review after event reporting from ECCC and/or the insurance sector.
 - c. Investigate opportunities for increased communication between CEMA and ECCC when severe storms are approaching.
5. Emergency Management Systems Integration
 - a. Look into City departments using 3-1-1 to redeploy Service Requests (SR) to the entire organization for prioritization.
 - b. Examine the potential to use an event identifier for event-specific SRs.
 - c. Investigate the ability to visually represent real-time situational awareness to event-related SRs in the 3-1-1 system.

Collectively, City of Calgary emergency management agency partners and stakeholders have applied recommendations from previous events in order to adopt best practices and improve their ability to prepare for and to respond to declared emergencies in a rapid, coordinated and effective manner. The continuous improvement and learnings from this event will lead to a safer, more disaster-resilient Calgary.

Response Limitations

The City will continue to enhance its awareness, preparedness, and response capacity, but it may be important to note that the damages that occurred during this event would not necessarily have been reduced had there been a further-enhanced emergency response.

Current risk mitigation work is being undertaken by The City to enhance resilience of new and existing buildings. In collaboration with industry, the work includes a number of education and incentive options as well as potential regulatory changes. Furthermore, The City is also working on enhanced stormwater modelling and key stormwater infrastructure upgrades. These initiatives will likely have a greater impact on increasing community resilience to these types of events.

It is not possible to completely mitigate the risk of hail; the goal is to increase preparedness and reduce risk. Each emergency event provides opportunities to test, adjust and advance disaster-planning. The 2020 June hailstorms provided several key learnings that provide the opportunity to continue to develop and refine preparations and response plans for future events.