

THE ELLIOT LAKE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY - PHASE II

ROUND TABLES 1 AND 2

WRITTEN RESPONSES OF CITY OF TORONTO AND HEAVY URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE

The following are the written responses of City of Toronto and Heavy Urban Search and Rescue ("HUSAR") to the questions posed in Round Tables 1 and 2, for Part II of the Elliot Lake Inquiry. The responses are identified in italics under the relevant questions.

Roundtable 1: Issues relating to the conduct and management of an emergency response:

1. IMS related issues:

- a. How can Incident Management System be made more understandable, simpler and still achieve its purposes?

Most issues with understanding IMS can be dealt with through greater training. All municipal services should be trained to a basic level of understanding of the IMS system.

- b. Should Incident Management System be required in emergency management-related legislation?

Incidents need to be managed by using best practices. In most instances, this will involve using all or part of IMS. What needs to be considered is that the IMS is scalable and not all components need to be implemented. While the IMS system should be followed generally, not all aspects of the system will need to be followed in every instance, and the commanders of an incident should maintain the ability and option to implement only those aspects of IMS that are suitable for the particular incident.

- c. Should Ontario use the same Incident Command System as other jurisdictions in North America?

The IMS that is used in Ontario should be based on similar systems in other jurisdictions, with any modifications that may be necessary to adapt to the particular needs of Ontario.

- d. Should elements of Incident Management System be mandatory? If so, what elements should be mandatory?

- (i) Incident Action Plans
- (ii) Planning Operation/Planning cycle
- (iii) Communications
- (iv) Debriefing

Each rescue situation is different, and command must be able to adapt IMS to the particular incident. However, command must give consideration to the following basic fundamental elements of IMS: Command, Operations, Planning, Finance, and Logistics.

Incident Action Plans are important, but the form and substance of the plan will vary depending on the nature of the incident. Command must be able to maintain the ability to adapt IMS to create the Incident Action Plan that is most suitable to the particular incident. Similarly, planning cycles and operations are important to all incidents. However, the nature of the planning that is required will vary with each particular incident.

The communications required for each incident will vary depending on the nature of the incident and the number of entities that are responding.

Not all incidents will be of the nature where a formal debriefing is required, and consideration must be given to the costs of a formal debriefing, as well as ability to perform a formal debriefing in each individual incident.

- e. Can the terminology involved be clarified and expressed in simpler terms (e.g. Incident Commander)?

The terminology is clear, or will become clear, for those that use it on a regular basis for routine incidents. While members who were involved in rescues prior to the implementation of IMS still use older terms on occasion, the IMS terms are being adapted through use and repetition. With complex incidents and large structure, more IMS terms are used. The use of a large number of IMS terms can cause confusion. For this reason, training is important to provide the clarity.

- f. Should there be a requirement for a preliminary reconnaissance by someone either on the scene or who can be transported there quickly i.e. by air especially where the scene is remote from Toronto so planning can begin immediately?

The initial size up is done by first responding crews. If special reconnaissance teams are required, the reason for the request will be passed along to the responding team. As more advanced teams arrive they need to assume the reconnaissance responsibility for the next level. If a medium team cannot respond in a timely fashion, then a reconnaissance

team could be deployed, depending on the nature of the incident. This has been discussed in the past, and HUSAR has deployed a reconnaissance team on at least two occasions, being the responses in Woodstock and Windsor.

2. Organization of Search and Rescue Teams

- a. What is the role of the Provincial Government in managing, and being responsible for, search and rescue resources?

Provincial government needs to be responsible for adequate funding for equipping, training, peer review, and deployment of teams as required. The provincial government also needs to be responsible for ensuring interprovincial agreements are put in place to allow teams to be used outside of Ontario and to request other teams from outside Ontario to assist should the need arise.

However, once the emergency teams are on site at an emergency, they should be able to manage the incident in the manner command determines most appropriate, without the need to obtain any further approvals from the provincial government.

- b. Within the Provincial Government, which department(s)/agency(ies) should be responsible for managing search and rescue assets?

The Office of the Ontario Fire Marshal is the provincial government agency best equipped to manage search and rescue assets.

- c. Should the Ontario Provincial Police and the Office of the Fire Marshal manage discreet search and rescue resources?

Urban search and rescue is best performed by multi-disciplinary teams. Such teams provide rescues with the benefit of teams having experience, training, and expertise in the different aspects of search and rescue, such as firefighters, police, and paramedics.

Multi-disciplinary teams can be made up through the joint efforts of the provincial assets (such as the OPP) and municipal assets (such as municipal fire, police and EMS services). HUSAR is set up in this model, using members of Toronto Fire Services, Toronto Police Service, and Emergency Medical Services. A search and rescue team that is made up of only one discipline cannot offer to the rescue the important expertise and knowledge of the other disciplines.

However, in any urban search and rescue team the relevant fire services should be involved. Fire services are the most appropriate agency for

urban search and rescue, as is set out in the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, which defines fire protection services as including: fire suppression, fire prevention, fire safety education, communication, training of persons involved in the provision of fire protection services, rescue and emergency services, and the delivery of these services.

3. Decentralized Emergency Management

- a. Does the model of “bottom-up response” established by the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* and its regulations need to be refined?

It is Toronto's position that this model does not need to be changed. The vast majority of emergencies occur at the local and/or community level and are effectively managed by first responders at the emergency site level. First responders are familiar with the geography, local context, and diverse needs of their communities, and understand the cultural, organizational, and political settings in which they operate.

First responders are also knowledgeable about the risks and hazards in their communities that give rise to emergencies, which allows for home-grown solutions tailored to the unique environment of a given community. These are important pre-conditions for successful emergency response.

When an emergency overwhelms local resources, municipalities can request assistance from the provincial and/or federal governments, if required. A range of legal and administrative tools such as mutual aid agreements, mutual assistance agreements, and memorandums of understanding with community and private sector partners can be called upon to build emergency management capacity and disaster-resilient communities.

- b. Are communities adequately supported by the Province?

It is Toronto's position that increasing the funding and training provided by the province to communities would be beneficial to the municipalities. While the majority of Toronto's training is performed internally, greater funding and training opportunities are necessary for the HUSAR team to maintain its heavy capabilities, as discussed herein.

- c. Is there adequate oversight of local preparedness, such as emergency management plans and related training?

The City of Toronto's Office of Emergency Management (the "OEM") working group meets annually with the provincial Emergency

Management Ontario field officer to review the City of Toronto's emergency management program.

Toronto OEM is able to achieve compliance with Toronto's emergency management plan. Emergency Management Ontario provides adequate oversight to the City of Toronto in this regard.

- d. Should the Province have responsibility for dealing with specific roles, such as media relations?

The municipality affected by the incident should be responsible for media relations, with the assistance and support of the province if needed.

- e. Should teams, such as Incident Support teams used in the United States, be considered in the Ontario emergency management structure?

Incident Support Teams are used to support the local Incident Commander. This role could be filled by the command staff of the Heavy/Medium teams, similar to what is done in Alberta.

An Incident Support team would provide valuable experience that all rescues would benefit from.

4. Clarity in the relevant legislation

- a. Should the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, its regulations, or policies related to it, specify the powers of Ministry of Labour inspectors in an emergency?

There appears to be confusion as to what the Ministry of Labour ("MOL") powers are as they related to an emergency incident. The MOL's role and authority in a rescue situation should be clarified.

- b. How can the powers and authority of the Ministry of Labour at a rescue/recovery be clarified? How can the manner in which those powers should be exercised be clarified?

As far as fires services are concerned, the powers and authority of the MOL can be clarified through section 21 of the guidance notes under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The guidance notes set out the best practices for fire services, and could be amended to clarify the role of the MOL at a rescue/recovery.

It is HUSAR's position that the MOL should not be provided the power to terminate a rescue/recovery. This decision should be left to the Incident

Commander, after considering the advice and recommendations of the various members of the rescue/recovery, including the MOL.

- c. Do any laws need amendment in order to allow responders to access and remove bodies located on private property?

In the event that an emergency response reaches the stage where the removal of bodies outside of the rescue context is required, which, if any, organization has the power to demolish a building to recover bodies should be clarified through an amendment to the appropriate statute or regulation.

This issue should be reviewed by the province, in consultation with the potential stakeholders.

5. Directory of Vital Services:

- a. Should emergency response-related entities be required to maintain a directory of emergency-related vital services such as heavy equipment and lumber?

A directory of emergency-related vital services would be helpful. Such directories should be specific to those services that may be required by each particular emergency response-related entity, and the directories will need to be developed and updated over time as more equipment may be deemed vital or becomes available.

- b. What vital services should be required to be included in such a directory?

The emergency-related vital services would be wide and varied depending on the type of emergency. Every emergency is different, and vital services lists would need to be updated through lessons-learned after each emergency.

Roundtable 2: Issues relating to the entities that may respond to an emergency:

1. What should be the future of the Province's urban search and rescue resources?

- a. Is there a role/requirement for a heavy search and rescue team?

Yes, for incidents that would last longer than 24 hours these teams are critical. Medium response teams do not have the same capacity and capabilities as heavy teams. Medium teams are sustainable for one day, whereas heavy teams can sustain a response for ten days.

Medium teams are unable to deploy as many members as heavy teams, and the medium teams' mandate involves responding to collapses involving smaller structures than the heavy teams' mandate. The heavy teams' mandate includes responding to the collapse of any type of structure from light frame to reinforced concrete.

Medium teams are not able to treat as many injured people as heavy teams can. Heavy teams deploys with doctors and structural engineers, which medium teams do not do.

Heavy teams such as HUSAR are efficient in that they are multi-disciplinary teams made up of active members of fire, police, and emergency medical services. The HUSAR members obtain daily training and real-world experience through their home agencies that can be applied to their roles in HUSAR. The HUSAR members put their training into practice on a daily basis through their home agencies.

Without a heavy team in Ontario, Ontario would need to rely on other national heavy teams or potentially an American FEMA team to assist in an emergency that is beyond the medium capabilities.

- b. Should there be more medium and/or light teams?

There are currently medium teams that have not been officially recognized by the province. A needs-based assessment would need to be performed once these teams are recognized to determine the need for and placement of additional teams.

Having many teams that are underutilized will be difficult to maintain. Increasing the number of medium teams will not make up for the increased resources and manpower that a heavy team can deploy.

- c. Where should they be located?

Whether additional medium and light teams are would be helpful, and where they would be helpful, would depend on any service gaps that are identified, and any response criteria developed, through a needs-based assessment.

- d. What should be the expertise and capabilities of these teams?

Any new medium or light teams should be able to assess and perform rescue operations as per team designations as defined by Public Safety Canada's Canadian Urban Search and Rescue classification guide. If the expertise and capabilities of the light and medium teams are increased

then what would occur is that light teams would become medium teams and medium teams would become heavy teams.

- e. How should sites far from Toronto, especially in Northern Ontario, be accessed more quickly?

- (i) Can other entities, such as Ontario Mine Rescue, be integrated into the current emergency response structure, at least in some areas?

The answer to this question depends on the level of expertise and capabilities such entities may have. All options can potentially have a benefit during an incident.

HUSAR deploys primarily to large-scale incidents. In such incidents it is expected that the first responders will have started the rescue process, and the closest medium team will have deployed, analyzed the scene, and began the rescue process. When HUSAR arrives it brings the expertise, capabilities, and manpower to continue the rescue on a larger scale with greater access to equipment, engineers, and medical staff.

While entities such as Ontario Mine Rescue may be of assistance, the system is already intended for the medium team to arrive before HUSAR to begin a rescue. There are inherent dangers involved in teams without sufficient NFPA structural collapse training initiating a structural collapse rescue. The light, medium, and heavy teams are specifically trained to conduct urban search and rescue. Other teams that may be trained to respond to other types of emergencies will not have this same training, and could cause more harm than good to a rescue if they begin operations before the search and rescue teams are on site to form the operations and planning sections.

- (ii) Can Federal assets, such as cargo transport planes, be deployed?

Yes, if required and in situations where it would assist in a timely response. However, the appropriate agreements with the federal government would have to be entered into in order to use federal assets.

2. Deployment of search and rescue assets

- a. How can it be assured that sufficient personnel are deployed to particular emergencies?

There will always be outside factors which can impact the size of any team's deployment. However, larger rosters and increased member training in the core IMS activities, as well as interprovincial agreements for the use of Heavy teams, could improve the ability to deploy all personnel that may be beneficial to a particular incident. Further funding for additional training and equipment purchases would allow for a larger pool of potential responders.

- b. How can it be assured that sufficient personnel are deployed with training in specialized areas such as rigging, planning?

See the response to question 2 (a) above.

- c. Can response time be improved? Is six hours the best possible mobilization time that can be expected for a heavy team?

Given the size of the team and assets that HUSAR deploys, six hours is an appropriate response time. However, greater funding would allow for the purchase of vehicles such as tractors, which could assist with a quicker deployment by eliminating the need to source and rent such vehicles. Because HUSAR has to rent its tractors, it is affected by the availability of the tractors when an emergency occurs. Greater funding would allow for better-equipped buses and enhanced methods of contacting and deploying the team.

HUSAR had previously been receiving Joint Emergency Preparedness Program ("JEPP") funding from the federal government. However, the JEPP funding was cancelled as of April 1, 2013. HUSAR no longer has any federal funding and this funding has not been otherwise replaced.

The JEPP funding HUSAR received varied from year-to-year, from as high as \$1.4 million to as low as \$460,000. In 2012, HUSAR received \$300,000 in funding from the province, \$400,000 in funding from Toronto, and \$468,000 in federal funding. As a result of the loss of the JEPP funding, HUSAR lost what amounted to 40% of its 2012 funding.

The loss of JEPP funding affects HUSAR's future expenditures, including the purchase of equipment that is used up or has a life cycle, and items that allow TF-3 to deploy for longer periods of time such as the camp tents and food and other perishables.

3. Jurisdiction/Command and Control

- a. When more than one entity responds to an emergency, how should command and control operate? (ie. who should be in charge?)

The Fire Chief of the Municipality in which the emergency is occurring should remain incident commander.

- b. Should there be a more specific command structure within individual entities and between different entities (eg, the command structure within TF3 and the command structure between TF3 and UCRT)?

Toronto supports HUSAR and the medium teams negotiating and putting in place policies and procedures which clearly define their respective roles and responsibilities. The roles and responsibilities should be consistent when HUSAR deploys with any medium team.

The Incident and Task Force Commanders should maintain the ability to site-promote the members that are best suited for a particular role in each individual incident.

Each search and rescue team will have its own command structure in accordance with their protocol. What is important is that who (which agency) has been assigned the responsibility for each sector needs to be clearly stated by command and followed by all those assigned to the sector.

4. Consistency in Response

- a. Should there be greater consistency in training standards among emergency-related entities?

HUSAR trains to the NFPA standards which are universally recognized in North America. The Canadian task force teams were working to implement consistent training when the JEPP funding was taken away.

HUSAR recommends that all of the light, medium, and heavy teams receive consistent training, up to their respective mandates. However, HUSAR is not aware of any major inconsistencies in the teams' training.

- b. Should emergency-related entities train together more frequently?

Yes. Memorandums of understanding between the provincial and federal urban search and rescue teams, and between the teams and their respective provinces, could assist in providing for greater opportunities and mechanisms for the teams to train together. Additional funding would be required to increase HUSAR's training activities.

- c. How can uniformity in communications (e.g. radio communications) be improved? This question address communications among responders (eg. radio communications), as well as consistency in communications between elements of the response apparatus (Community Control Group, responders and the province), the media and the public.

There are ways of connecting the different radio frequencies, such as using the AC1000, which allows various radio frequencies to be merged. Purchasing such equipment, or purchasing compatible radios for all teams, will require funding.

With respect to communications amongst agencies, business cycle meetings at site are the best method of ensuring all stakeholders are aware of the incident action plan and who is responsible for each task.

All agencies involved should have appropriate representation in the emergency operations centre and/or the community control group, and on site, if required by the Incident Commander. The representatives of the agencies on site need to be able to tell the emergency operations centre and/or the community control group what is required for the incident.

The representation of all agencies in the emergency operations centre and/or the community control group would also assist in providing consistent information to the media and the public.

- d. How can terminology used by different emergency-related entities be more consistent (e.g. incident commander, action plans)?

HUSAR does not believe there is a real issue around the use and understanding of most terms. The terms used are also less important than whether the individual rescuers understand the tasks that are assigned. If there is uncertainty, the uncertain member needs to ask for clarification.

5. Role of Engineers

- a. Should search and rescue teams be required to have a structural engineer as part of their team?

Heavy teams already deploy with engineers. If the heavy team is not deploying, the medium team should have arrangements in place to source engineers locally.

- b. What should be the role of a structural engineer in a rescue involving a collapsed or partially collapsed structure?

The engineers should be able to provide advice on what caused a collapse, the resulting hazards, what the potential loads are on a structure, and what can be done to alleviate hazards, such as through stabilizing, shoring, or avoidance.

- c. Who should fill the role of engineer in such incidents (MOL, private industry)?

MOL engineers who have had the opportunity to train with the heavy and medium teams would be best suited to fill the engineer role. HUSAR will continue to deploy an embedded engineer, sourced either from a private company or the MOL.

- d. Where should the engineering resources be located?

HUSAR will continue to deploy an embedded engineer. Any other engineers that are deployed to an incident should be sourced as locally as possible in a given incident, provided they have had some training related to rescue situations.

6. Equipment and Expertise

- a. Are there gaps in equipment that is accessible by emergency-related assets?

HUSAR has been able to purchase the equipment it believes is necessary to meet the NFPA guidelines. As the equipment becomes used-up or obsolete, or as more-effective equipment becomes available, further funding will be required to purchase new equipment.

Toronto is concerned that with the loss of the JEPP funding it will not be able to purchase the equipment that is needed to maintain and enhance its current capabilities. The loss of JEPP funding will affect HUSAR's future expenditures, including the purchase of equipment that is used up or has a life cycle, and items that allow TF-3 to deploy for longer periods of time such as the camp tents and food and other perishables.

- b. Are there gaps in the training related to heavy equipment?

No. HUSAR has implemented the training for its equipment which complies with the NFPA standards. With greater funding, HUSAR could implement further complementary training for equipment such as cranes.

- c. If so, how can those gaps be filled?

Please see the responses to questions 6 (a) and (b) above.