



**SAGE**

**Seniors' Action Group  
of  
Elliot Lake**

**Recommendations To The Elliot Lake Commission of  
Inquiry  
Regarding the Algo Mall Collapse, June 23, 2012  
Phase 2 of Inquiry Only**



## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHASE TWO ONLY** **ELLIOT LAKE INQUIRY**

**PREPARED FOR SAGE BY KEITH MOYER, CHAIRPERSON**

**The following Recommendations are put forth for consideration by Mr. Commissioner for inclusion in his final Recommendations to the Province of Ontario. It is requested that the reader look to the separate file containing the Final Phase 2 Closing Statements, put forth by SAGE, in which are contained Observations on which these Recommendations are based.**

### **Recommendation 1**

It is recommended that all businesses be equipped with required Fire Safety & Evacuation Plans for their own premises within a mall or multi occupant type facility, approved by the local fire authority and a record of "Supervisory Staff" identified as being responsible for assuring safe evacuation of all staff and occupants from said premises in case of any emergency. It is further recommended that this Plan be practiced at least semi annually by all staff and that records of all practices or "drills" be recorded and reviewed by the local fire authority during annual inspections.

### **Recommendation 2**

It is recommended that, in conjunction with Provincial Ministries of Community & Social Services and Health, a program of assigning on going psychological and Post Traumatic Stress [PTSD] treatment and counseling be set up on a local basis for all victims and families after any major disaster such as this event was.

### **Recommendation 3**

It is recommended that local EMS procedures be updated and strengthened to assure that adequate responses are automatic to any

major disaster, with adequate transport vehicles and staff, and potential required materials and equipment to face and deal with any possible issue they may face on arrival, including supervision and triage capability. If adequate ambulance vehicles are not readily available, then some form of alternate transportation should be available immediately for the treatment of the injured. [In this instance, one must remember that the hospital is less than one kilometer from the scene.]

#### **Recommendation 4**

It is recommended that, whatever changes may or may not be made to this legislation, the Province of Ontario move immediately to strengthen its role in not only setting forth the legislation, but, in making sure it is complied with, which may include making the compliance with this as a “legal personal responsibility” of every member of council, such as exists under the Ontario Clean Water Protection Act, and thus, includes personal penalty for non compliance. It is of little value to the citizens of Ontario for its Provincial Government to make laws, but simply ignore non compliance without consequence.

#### **Recommendation 5**

It is recommended that the Provincial Government increase funding and recruitment for UCRT, so as to permit the establishment of more of these teams in various areas of Ontario, for example, Thunder Bay; Sault Ste Marie or Sudbury; Ottawa area; and South Western Ontario, such as Windsor. This would not necessarily require a full training facility such as exists at Bolton, but, merely a minimal manpower compliment of possibly 2 compliment to maintain equipment in readiness and be called upon as UCRT when deployment necessary and an identical equipment bank as now in Bolton. Equipment and vehicles could be cached at the outlying locations and be in a state of readiness at all times, while training can still be done centrally.

In the event of a need for services, members closest by could deploy, and, if required, others from other centres could fly in with only personal kit and utilize equipment available close to the site. Personnel would arrive more rested and ready to assist quickly.

Perhaps, some HUSSAR members could be seconded to the OPP, and HUSSAR dissolved. In light of the withdrawal of Federal funding for these teams across Canada, and current funding from the City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario, perhaps these funds, in part, could be redirected to the UCRT program, while continuing to lobby the Federal Government to reestablish funding for public safety and rescue programs. HUSSAR has become top heavy and is a considerable expense for a limited response capability by members who do not meet the same high level certification of UCRT.

### **Recommendation 6**

It is recommended that a complete database of sources and suppliers throughout Ontario for materials and equipment that commonly are required to be deployed by either UCRT or HUSSAR in any varied emergency to which they are sent, be immediately compiled and kept current through Emergency Management Ontario, which can be readily accessed by deployed field staff; OFM; and local Incident Command. In addition, a similar database be set up containing a list of potential professional structural engineers and like professionals who could be called upon in any area of the province.

### **Recommendation 7**

It is recommended that once an Incident Commander has been appointed, that is the ONLY individual who is empowered to make a final decision as to how to proceed, based, of course, on expert advice from other team players, but, not as a “Committee” decision. The process of “Unified Command” should be set aside with all team commanders submitting all information, plans and recommendations through this Commander only, and not at a CCG meeting with non professional people running this entity, which has other unrelated responsibilities. Likewise, as was the case of the UCRT original request for materials and equipment, the requirements should be channeled directly through the Incident Commander and not an intermediary not personally involved in the rescue/recovery operation.

### **Recommendation 8**

It is recommended that each responder team [USRT and/or TF3] team be

equipped with common frequency radio equipment and, on scene arrival, provide Incident Command with adequate units to service his own responder team leaders on site with same as well as himself. Until arrival of specialist teams, the local Fire and EMS radio communication will suffice, but as the operation unfolds, instant communication is required.

### **Recommendation 9**

Given the technology of the day, it is recommended that on site rescue/recovery personnel be equipped with a key-less and wireless transmitter set to a recorder on their belt, perhaps, into which they can voice transmit their notes as they go, and, if necessary, transcribe them into hard copy later. These units would be equipped with a large capacity memory card or, thumb drive type device, and each of the electronic media would be preserved in the same way as officer's note books currently are. This would serve to archive a chronological record of each officers activity and eliminate loss of activity record due to having to recollect later. In any event, notes, in any form, must be taken and maintained by all deployed to an incident, especially those in a command position.

### **Recommendation 10**

It is recommended that the Ministry of Labour attend such incidents, of course, but, ONLY in an advisory capacity and ONLY when asked for advice. There should be no "threats" of "shutting the site down" nor should there be any undue pressure or influence exercised to convince Incident Command to bend to their wishes. Any final decisions as to the status of the operation shall be the exclusive domain of that Incident Commander alone.

### **Recommendation 11**

If the current split situation of HUSSAR and UCRT remains in effect, overlooking Recommendation 5, above, then the Command structure between the groups must be established in policy and adhered to at all joint deployments. Rank should play no part in the formation of a Command Individual, and, establishment of Command on the site should be assigned to the first organization with boots on the ground. Even then,

the ultimate decision for any action or withdrawal shall remain the domain of the one and only Incident Commander for the occurrence, without exception.

### **Recommendation 12**

All teams involved in any rescue or even recovery operation must undertake an open debriefing of all individuals who deployed to the event, and an after incident report prepared and used internally for future training and improvements, as well as filed officially with Emergency Measures Ontario. This should be completed within 60 to 90 days, following the end of the incident. Perhaps, this after incident report should be shared with any other rescue organization who was deployed to that incident also.

### **Recommendation 13**

The Ministry of Labour must undertake a complete review of all field inspectors, as to their training, background, experience, and personal suitability to carry out the required duties.

### **Recommendation 14**

It is recommended that TF3, or any other highly “specialized” rescue team, other than local Fire Departments, all be trained and certified to a minimum level of “Rescue Systems 2”, and that all training exercises involving structural collapse, include exercises in cranes and rigging operations. Given that structures are becoming larger and more structurally complicated, it is imperative that the use of heavy equipment be part of all training for rescue teams.

### **Recommendation 15**

It is recommended that all TF3 members, if this team remains a viable rescue team, be subject to, at minimum, quarterly full physical examinations, and, if desirable, monthly “cursory exams” on a monthly basis. This will avoid wasting valuable time prior to deployment to an emergency situation.

## **Participants In Preparation of This Presentation**

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The Citizens of Elliot Lake who encouraged us, supported us, and inputted