

Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs

The Elliot Lake Commission of Inquiry

November 13, 2013

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

1. a, b and c

– All of these submissions involve what happens at an incident involving rescue.

- The O AFC has already endorsed provincial IMS and continues to endorse it with the understanding that it does not interfere or render inefficient or unsafe the longstanding fire ground command system that is in place across Ontario, in a manner consistent with the assurances provided by Emergency Management Ontario at the inception of IMS.

- At all rescue incidents the fire department is the Incident Commander.

- The Incident Commander has to be on the scene.

- The Incident Management System is hierarchical.

- The Incident Management System has to be scalable within the incident.

- The Incident Commander reports to the Emergency Operations Centre following the declaration of an emergency.

- The fire departments have a longstanding practice of utilizing the Incident Command System. Fire departments use the Incident Command System to coordinate operations for most rescue situations because there is rarely a need to expand it to the IMS which includes categories such as logistics, planning and finance. In circumstances where there is a large scale rescue, such as Elliot Lake, the Incident Command System would scale upwards to embrace the full IMS.

- The difficulty is that the police, EMS, and provincial government officials do not deploy IMS/ICS for routine or small scale incidents as is the practice of the fire departments.

- To make IMS better the police, EMS and other government officials should utilize the Incident Command System on a daily basis so that when they arrive at a rescue incident it is second nature for them to integrate into the existing Incident Command System which will be in place.

- In incidents such as underwater rescue or open space search and rescue the police would be the Incident Commanders and the fire department would operate a sector under the police Incident Commander.

- In our opinion, few regional police forces would call in the UCRT Team.

- d) - No, they should not be mandatory. They are tools available to the Incident Commander that can be implemented as required in order to successfully manage and mitigate the emergency. The IC implements components of IMS as the needs and circumstances dictate.
  - e) - Yes, there needs to be common language among all emergency response agencies.
  - f) - No. There cannot be a partial deployment of HUSAR.
- 2.
- a) - The sole responsibility of the Province of Ontario should be the provision of funding to the municipalities who provide the search and rescue services, including HUSAR .
  - b) - The provincial government should not be responsible for managing search and rescue assets as these assets are controlled and deployed at the municipal level.
  - c) - No, it would be a duplication of service.
- 3.
- a) - The “bottom-up response” model does not need to be refined. All emergency responses are initiated at the municipal level.
  - b) - There continues to be a lack of provincial funding provided to municipalities for the provision of search and rescue assets.
  - c) - No, historically there hasn’t been adequate oversight of local preparedness but corrective action has been taken with the recent amalgamation of OFM and EMO.
  - d) - No, unless assistance is requested by the Incident Commander. Media relations should be handled through the appropriate branch of the IMS, under the direction of the Incident Commander.
  - e) - Yes there would be benefit to considering this, however it would have to be in conjunction with the Mutual Aid Program, which provides the framework for addressing issues such as who pays, WSIB coverage, liability for negligence, collective agreement, contracting out provisions, etc..

4. a) - Yes, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* should be clarified to state that a Ministry of Labour Inspector has no power and authority to interfere with an active rescue and/or the Incident Commander under the *Act*.
- b) - See above.
- c) - Rights of entry and access for the fire department is clearly defined under the FPPA. This could be further clarified.
5. a) - Yes, it would be beneficial if this was included in the municipal emergency plans as an Appendix.
- b) - Services as determined by local municipalities.

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

1. a) - Yes. There is a critical need for a properly funded and maintained HUSAR program nationally.
- b) - There should be a needs assessment.
- c) - Same as above.
- d) - Same as above.
- e) - Same as above.
  - (i) Introducing outside agencies into fire department rescues compromises the firefighter Health and Safety Program and IMS operations.
  - (ii) Yes.
2. a) - Properly funded teams.
- b) - Properly funded teams.
- c) - Properly funded teams.
3. a) - See answer to Roundtable 1, Question 1.
- b) - See answer to Roundtable 1, Question 1.
4. a) - All emergency services should have greater consistency in training standards.
- b) - Yes.

- c) - Inter-operability needs to be enhanced. This work has been ongoing for many years across numerous jurisdictions with no significant results.
  - d) - There needs to be common language among all emergency response agencies.
- 5.
- a) - Yes
  - b) - This is a component of the HUSAR Program.
  - c) - This should be pre-defined by the HUSAR provider.
  - d) - This is component of the HUSAR Team.
6. (a, b, c) The response to this question needs to be answered by HUSAR.