

Shelter, Support and Housing Administration  
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## Hostel Services Guideline – Emergency Plans **2005 - 13**

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| <b>Number:</b>                       | 2005-13  |
| <b>Date Issued:</b>                  | September 15, 2005   |
| <b>Last City Guideline Received:</b> | 2005 - #12 Ontario Works Eligibility   |
| <b>Subject:</b>                      | Emergency Plans  |
| <b>Effective Date:</b>               | March 6, 2006  |
| <b>Applicable to:</b>                | The policies and procedures in this City Guideline are mandatory and are to be implemented by all shelter providers. |
| <b>Who To Call for Information:</b>  | Agency Review Officer  |

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### **BACKGROUND:**

On an nightly basis there are over 4,100 shelter beds in the family, single adult and youth shelter system. In most cases these beds are filled by homeless people who have no other options for shelter. As a result, it is very important that each shelter develops emergency plans that effectively assist staff and your agency in responding to emergency situations that may affect shelter operations. It is each agency's responsibility to ensure that the emergency plans are in place and appropriate for your facility and client group.

On April 29 and May 5, 2005, Hostel Services invited all shelter providers to an emergency planning workshop. The intent of this workshop was to provide an overview of the role of the City of Toronto in managing major emergencies, review agency's responsibilities related to effective emergency planning and to provide some practical tools and information for developing emergency plans.

## Action Required:

1. Each shelter is required to have written emergency plans in place no later than March 1, 2006.
2. A copy of these plans must be submitted to Hostel Services no later than March 15, 2006. The plans must include a list of emergency contact information in case Hostel Services needs to contact agency management staff after hours or on weekends. Any changes to the emergency contact information must be submitted to Hostel Services 48 hours prior to the effective date of change.
3. Emergency plans must include protocols and plans that respond to the following scenarios: evacuation(s), fire, flooding, major power failures, gas and / or chemical leaks, loss of heat or water supply, bomb threats, and weather-related emergencies such as ice storms, blizzards, etc. Note this is not an exhaustive list, each agency is expected to conduct its own risk management assessment of its operations to determine if other emergency plans should also be developed.
4. Each agency should assess the potential risks for City-wide emergencies, local community emergencies, and site specific emergencies, and establish plans accordingly. Minimally, plans must include contingencies for shelter, food and water provision in place (on-site), off-site, and/or outside of the immediate neighbourhood. These evacuation plans should also include alternate sites in case an evacuation is necessary.
5. Plans should be based on the assumption that assistance from the City may not be available or accessible for the first 72 hours after the initiation of a large-scale emergency.
6. All shelters must develop a regular staff training process to ensure that staff are fully prepared including drilling/practice exercises to ensure that staff are fully prepared in the event of an emergency.
7. At least annually each agency must complete these training/ practice exercises. These exercises must be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the plans and should be updated and/or modified as necessary. Each agency must keep a written record on file of the evaluation of these exercises including a list of all staff who participated in the training exercises.
8. On an annual basis as part of the annual budget submission process, shelters will be required to submit a copy of the evaluation of the exercises, and any changes and / or modifications to the emergency plans.

As a way to assist shelters in this process Hostel Services has developed a generic planning tool/framework that is attached to this guideline. This framework may be helpful in developing your plans. The tool may not address all circumstances and is intended only to assist you in starting the planning process.

The following is a list of other potential resources for your consideration in developing and /or reviewing your emergency plans:

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety [www.ccohs.ca](http://www.ccohs.ca)

City of Toronto Office of Emergency Management  
[www.toronto.ca/wes/techservices/oem/index.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/wes/techservices/oem/index.htm)

Emergency Management Ontario  
[www.mpss.jus.gov.on.ca/english/pub\\_security/emo/about\\_emo.html](http://www.mpss.jus.gov.on.ca/english/pub_security/emo/about_emo.html)

Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada [www.ocipep.gc.ca/home/index\\_e.asp](http://www.ocipep.gc.ca/home/index_e.asp)  
<http://www.emergencypreparednessweek.ca/>

FEMA info for Kids <http://www.fema.gov/kids/>

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Agency Review Officer or Maura Lawless, Manager of Operations and Support Services 416-397-4493.

Sincerely,

Maura Lawless  
Manager, Operations and Support Services  
Hostel Services