



Community Evacuation Guidelines

The aim of an Evacuation Plan is to effectively evacuate and care for community members during an emergency. An Evacuation Plan assists in streamlining the evacuation process, particularly in little or no-warning emergencies, by providing an organized framework for the activities involved in coordinating and conducting an evacuation. This guide will identify the critical elements of an Evacuation Plan.

State of Emergency Declaration

Chief and Council can declare a state of emergency by completing a Band Council Resolution and submitting a signed copy to the Provincial Emergency Operations Center (PEOC) Duty Officer by email: peocdo01@ontario.ca or fax: 1-416-314-0474. Chief and Council should also call the PEOC Duty Officer (available 24 hours a day) by telephone at: 1 (416) 314-0472 or 1 (866) 314-0472 to discuss their local situation and if an evacuation is necessary. The PEOC will help provide Chief and Council with the most current and accurate information on the emergency as well as host site locations to help Chief and Council make an informed decision on evacuating.

Triggers For An Evacuation

The Chief and Council may decide to conduct a complete or partial evacuation based on an assessment of the current and future threat to community members. The decision to evacuate could also be prompted by advice based on the real-time threat assessment issued from, a provincial ministry like the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR), or the PEOC itself. Consideration must also be given to the time that it would take to evacuate the community. In ideal conditions, communities can be evacuated at a rate of approximately 500 people per day; weather, smoke conditions and availability of aircraft could cause this to be slower. Evacuations may take place prior to (pre-emptive), during, or after an incident has occurred.

- The trigger for a forest fire evacuation would be when the fire reaches or is anticipated to reach an established geographical boundary around the community; this is done through consultation with MNR fire management staff who are accessing real-time fire data.
- The trigger for a flood evacuation would be when the water level reaches an established level within the gauges and/or riverbanks.
- Factors that may also result in the need of an evacuation include persistent heavy smoke conditions affecting those with health conditions or no visibility to permit safe flight conditions at the airport for fly in access communities.



Roles & Responsibilities in an Evacuation

Chief and Council:

The Chief and Council are responsible for declaring a state of emergency and requesting assistance in evacuating the community. Chief and Council will determine the Host Site for their community based on available site options provided by the PEOC. Selection of Host Sites is coordinated in advance by the PEOC and is achieved through consultations with other partners including host community contacts, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ministry of Community and Social Services, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Indigenous Affairs Ontario, Indigenous Services Canada, PTO's, Tribal Councils as well as First Nations communities.

Evacuation Coordinator:

Co-ordination of evacuation and sheltering may be directed by an Evacuation Coordinator, who will ensure residents are taken to safety or sheltered with minimum delay and confusion in the event of an emergency. The evacuation Coordinator will be responsible for establishing a team who will be responsible for making air and ground transportation passenger lists.

Emergency Information Officer:

It is recommended that the Emergency Information Officer be in direct contact with the MNRF Fire Information Officers to ensure the community is receiving the most current and accurate fire/flood information.

A notification may encompass a warning that an emergency exists followed by instruction on the appropriate action to take such as evacuate, shelter-in-place, etc. The initial notification alerting of the emergency should also advise the community when and where additional information can be obtained (i.e. radio, Facebook, etc.).

Notifications, fact sheets and pre-prepared media releases are essential to ensure all members of the community receive notification and information on emergency procedures, the following mechanisms are available:

Notification to community members can be done by:

- Radio messages
- Door to door notification
- Mobile public address systems
- Social Media postings
- Text Messages
- CB radio nets operate in some areas

Notifications should be:

- Accurate,
- Consistent,
- Clear,
- Repeated,
- With as much prior notice as possible
-

Notifications should tell the community:

- What to take (Identification, medication, toiletries, clothing, money, bank card etc.)
- Where and when to go (airport/ bus)
- Transportation available and pickup locations
- What Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be required and supplied while traveling (i.e. Masks, hand sanitizer)
- Lock doors and close windows
- Turn off stove, utilities, etc.
- Drain water systems in winter
- What to do about pets and livestock

Community Liaisons:

In the event of an evacuation; community members must be pre-identified as community liaisons for the duration of the evacuation. It is their responsibility to ensure clear communications and community advocacy is occurring while evacuated. Community Liaisons will be expected to fulfil their role as described within the JEMS document as well as any additional task requested by Chief and Council.

Population Profile

The population profile is a breakdown of the different demographics within the community. The community should prepare a list of their community members that details names, ages, family members and the following categories:

- Elderly
- Chronic illness
- Mental health conditions (anxiety)
- Mobility limitations (wheelchair/walking aid)
- Residents of hospitals, nursing homes, and assisted care facilities
- Impaired senses – sight, hearing or speech impaired,
- Non-English-speaking
- Transient populations (e.g., tourists, seasonal workers, homeless)
- Breathing problems (asthma, COPD)
- Pregnancy
- Children under 5

The list needs to identify who will travel with the vulnerable persons for support and their relation to each other. For example, in the case of young children it's the primary caregiver and an additional support person such as father or grandparent. If possible, vulnerable persons should bring their own assistive devices but if not possible, then the list should identify what assists they will need when they arrive at the Host Site. Examples include strollers, wheelchairs, walkers etc.

Transportation

From the list of community members, air and ground transportation passenger lists must be created for the evacuation flights or busses. The passenger lists depend on the size of the vehicle, the average number of passengers per evacuation flight is 37 and the average number of passengers per coach bus is 50; it is suggested to use these numbers for pre-planning. Community members younger than 2 years old are not counted in the total passenger count on the passenger list but their names should still be included in the list for tracking purposes. The passenger lists should be organized by the order that evacuees will be

departing the community and each passenger list should clearly show the time and location of departure.

The categories for priority of evacuation are as follows:

First Priority: Medical Evacuation (Medevac)

- Medevac is used for those individuals receiving home care or residing in a health-care facility in the evacuating community that qualify for medical transfer as per the *Ambulance Act* (evacuation by emergency medical services (EMS) or Ornge).
- This stage is typically orchestrated through the existing health procedures used in the community.
- If local conditions (e.g. smoke or weather) prevent normal medical flights, emergency medical evacuation assistance using federal assets may be requested.

Second Priority: Stage 1 evacuees

- Stage 1 evacuees are defined as vulnerable populations.
- This includes persons with disabilities, seniors, children, pregnant women, and those with medical conditions.
- Among these, some require support; both the support person and the Stage 1 evacuee they care for should be on the Stage 1 evacuation list. Keeping them together is especially important as part of the COVID-19 mitigation efforts.

Third Priority: Stage 2 evacuees

- Stage 2 evacuees are all remaining residents of the community.
- It is important to keep family members together as much as possible—including those who are identified as more vulnerable—when identifying where individuals will be hosted. Keeping them together is especially important as part of the COVID-19 mitigation efforts.

Passenger lists should be posted as early as possible prior to the actual evacuation so that community members can be prepared for the time they are scheduled to leave.

In order for the municipal airport and host site to plan for receiving evacuees the passenger lists should be shared with the Duty Officer at the Provincial Emergency Operations Center (PEOC) immediately upon its completion by email: peocdo01@ontario.ca or fax: 1-416-314-0474. A copy of the passenger list must also be given to the pilot or driver before they leave the community with evacuees.

Evacuation Process

Community members should be at the airport with their baggage a minimum of two (2) hours before the scheduled departure to prevent passenger manifests and baggage weigh ins causing any unnecessary delays. Each community member who is 2 years or older can bring a maximum of 40 pounds of baggage each.

Considerations should be given to:

- How many people can fit inside the airport,
 - If the airport is too small, consider gathering people at another location (school or community centre) and then transporting them to the airport for their flight time
- If a bay in the MTO building can be cleared out to use as additional space for people,
- If there will be drinks and snacks at the airport and,
- If there are accessible bathrooms available,
- Physical distancing protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic,
- Hiring foot patrols to ensure people, especially children, wait in the correct locations and board the planes safely and efficiently,
- Hiring extra persons to assist with loading and unloading of aircrafts.

All these things should to be prepared in advance before the evacuation begins.

Destinations

When a community is evacuating, the Host Site is at the discretion of Chief and Council. As soon as they declare a state of emergency Chief and Council should notify the PEOC of their top three acceptable Host Site choices based on available site options provided by the PEOC.

If these sites are not available due to unforeseen circumstances, then Chief and Council will make alternative selections based on Host Site availability.

In some cases, it is necessary to use a transportation hub to allow the evacuation to happen more quickly. This means that community members will be flown immediately to a pre-selected, nearby community out of immediate danger, and from there be flown to the host location.

Returning Evacuees (Repatriation)

Before Re-Entry to Community:

The decision to re-enter an area that has been evacuated is based on numerous public safety factors and the removal of threat to the community. The impacted area must be safe for residents to return. Below is a list of some activities which NEED to be completed prior to returning:

- Inspection of the affected area
- Assisting any victims who did not evacuate
- Removing any deceased from the area
- Performing an initial assessment of damage to homes and businesses
- Removing debris
- Environmental monitoring/decontamination protocols
- Restoring utilities and basic services to the area

Repatriation:

Once the emergency is over and it is safe for evacuees to return home, a re-entry plan must be prepared. Some of the tasks that should be considered include:

- Ensure evacuees are notified that the emergency is terminated and that they will be returning home
- Determine if any work must be done before residents can return home, i.e. switch utilities back on, test drinking water, check for extent of damage, etc.
- Determine if basic food and clothing are required, i.e. if hydro has been off or houses have been damaged and arrange for supplies to be sent to the community with the returning evacuees.
- Make transportation arrangements for those requiring assistance to return home and prepare a list of people to be transported.
- Inform community members that everyone who is 2 years or older can bring a maximum of 40 pounds of baggage each. Any excess baggage must be shipped and paid for by the community member.
- Consider providing access to additional in community support for mental health



Evacuation Checklist

Task:	Date of Completion:
Activate the community Emergency Plan and declare a state of emergency.	
<p>Contact the Provincial Emergency Operations Center (PEOC) and inform them of the state of emergency declaration.</p> <p>Phone: 1 (416) 314-0472 or 1 (866) 314-0472</p> <p>Email: peocdo01@ontario.ca</p> <p>Fax: 1-416-314-0474</p>	
Determine whether an immediate evacuation is necessary (full or partial) or if shelter-in-place is preferred for the time being.	
Inform the PEOC of evacuation site choices immediately, this will allow the receiving community/facility time to staff-up and prepare to accept evacuees.	
IF evacuating, notify all community members and emergency response coordinator. Follow the evacuation plan.	
<p>Once completed sent the evacuation flight/bus manifest to the PEOC</p> <p>Email: peocdo01@ontario.ca</p> <p>Fax: 1-416-314-0474</p>	

