

## Ontario Strengthening Emergency Preparedness

New legislation would ensure response plans are tailored to local needs and enshrine Ontario Corps in law

May 26, 2025

[Emergency Preparedness and Response](#)

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TORONTO — The Ontario government is taking action to protect communities and build a stronger and more resilient province by reintroducing the *Emergency Management Modernization Act, 2025*. The proposed legislation will enhance public safety and disaster response measures, including making Ontario Corps a key function of emergency responses in the province.

"Extreme weather events like the ice storm this spring are unfortunately becoming more frequent. Our legislation reflects the need to be more prepared in the event of an emergency," said Jill Dunlop, Minister of Emergency Preparedness and Response. "That's why our government is recognizing the critical need for Ontario Corps, so they can be deployed at a moment's notice to help protect families and build a stronger, safer and more resilient Ontario."

[Ontario Corps](#) brings together experienced non-governmental partners and skilled volunteers to enhance on-the-ground emergency response that can be deployed quickly to support communities across the province. During the spring ice storm, Ontario Corps partners volunteered over 6,000 hours, delivering generators, providing 3,725 meals and food hampers, conducting over 4,100 wellness checks, providing tree-clearing services and supporting evacuation reception centres.

Following the establishment of the Ministry of Emergency Preparedness and Response as a standalone ministry with a dedicated minister in March, this legislation, if passed, would enable a more effective, coordinated and comprehensive approach to provincial and community emergency management. The changes would prioritize community-led approaches that help municipalities design emergency management programs that reflect their unique needs and capacities.

Enhancing Ontario's emergency management capacity is part of the government's plan to build a stronger and more resilient province with the necessary tools in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of people across the province.

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#### Quick Facts

- The proposed *Emergency Management Modernization Act, 2025* is the first comprehensive update to Ontario's emergency management legislation in more than 15 years.
  - The legislation is informed by valuable feedback from partners, best practices in emergency management and lessons learned from past emergencies. The province engaged with more than 550 partners, including municipalities, First Nations communities and emergency management organizations. The ministry also received 91 written submissions on a publicly posted discussion guide.
  - The legislation builds on the government's Provincial Emergency Management Strategy and Action Plan that outlines key actions the province is taking to ensure communities are safe, practiced and prepared before, during and after emergencies.
  - Ontario is building a new Emergency Preparedness and Response Headquarters. The new state-of-the-art complex will be designed to support the province's work to prepare for and respond to all types of disasters that will operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days of the year. It will include dedicated training rooms and warehousing and aviation infrastructure and will be built to withstand all types of disasters including earthquakes, tornadoes and floods.
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## Quotes

"The City of Orillia commends the Ontario government for taking decisive action to strengthen Ontario's emergency preparedness. In the wake of the 2025 ice storm that deeply impacted our community, we understand firsthand the critical importance of strong, modern emergency management with supports like Ontario Corps. This legislation is essential to ensuring communities like ours have the coordination, resources, and support needed to respond effectively in times of crisis."

**- Mayor Don McIsaac  
City of Orillia**

"Municipalities are on the frontlines of managing emergencies that are increasing in frequency and complexity. The Association of Municipalities of Ontario welcomes provincial leadership to improve the emergency management system through the Emergency Management and Modernization Act."

**- Robin Jones  
President of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Mayor of  
Westport**

"From floods, fires, pandemics and cyberattacks, rural municipalities across Ontario are managing a growing number of emergencies. Strong coordination is needed between provincial, municipal and other partners to ensure we're best prepared to respond. ROMA supports this provincial action to modernize the emergency management system."

**- Christa Lowry  
Chair of the Rural Ontario Municipal Association and Mayor of Mississippi  
Mills**

"As we mark three years since the EF2 tornado tore through Uxbridge's heritage downtown, I strongly support the Ontario government's efforts to modernize emergency management legislation. Smaller communities like ours rely on timely, coordinated support from the province. The proposed Emergency Management Modernization Act, 2025 will help ensure that Ontario municipalities can depend on the province to protect residents and strengthen community resilience."

**- Mayor Dave Barton  
Township of Uxbridge**

"Team Rubicon Canada welcomes Ontario's efforts to modernize emergency management through this legislation. As a humanitarian organization with a proven track record in disaster services, we know that effective response takes a Whole-of-Society approach and this Act reflects that spirit, creating space for trusted partners to support public systems and meet people where they are. We're proud to serve as a reliable auxiliary to government when it matters most."

**- Bryan Riddell  
CEO, Team Rubicon Canada**

"The Salvation Army welcomes this new Act as a meaningful step forward in strengthening how we prepare for and respond to emergencies across the province. By enhancing collaboration between all levels of government and community-based partners, this legislation supports a more coordinated and compassionate approach to disaster response."

**- Stephanie Couturier  
Divisional Director of Emergency Disaster Services, The Salvation Army  
Ontario Division**

"The number of disasters is rising placing more people in harm's way. Modernizing legislation is an important step to help the province of Ontario improve its capacity to respond, help people who are impacted and ultimately save lives. At GlobalMedic, we have a lot of experience responding to disasters and have seen the positive impact when communities are better prepared and have more capacity in the event of disasters. We applaud the improvements and changes being put forward in Ontario that will save lives."

**- Rahul Singh**

**O. Ont, Founder and Executive Director – GlobalMedic**

"Ogimaawabiitong, as a leader in supporting First Nation communities during emergency incidents is grateful for the support from the province during times of crisis."

**- Jennifer Dreaver**

**Executive Director, Ogimaawabiitong – Kenora Chiefs Advisory**

"Together with our 211 system partners, we are proud to be an Ontario Corps partner, providing an accessible public information channel for communities in times of crises. We look forward to working with Premier Ford and Minister Dunlop to support timely and well-coordinated emergency responses for Ontarians, particularly for vulnerable populations across our province."

**- Karen Milligan**

**Executive Director, Ontario 211 Services**

"We recognize the significance of this legislation as the first comprehensive update in over 15 years and are encouraged by the government's commitment to modernizing emergency coordination, enhancing community-level capacity, and ensuring robust deployment mechanisms through Ontario Corps. These measures are essential to better protect the safety and well-being of all Ontarians."

**- Mayor Sandie Macdonald**

**Essa Township**

## Additional Resources

- [Ontario Modernizing Emergency Management](#)
- [Emergency Management in Ontario](#)
- [Emergency Preparedness](#)
- [Ontario Corps](#)

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