

Response to Wood Buffalo Wildfire KPMG Report

Alberta Municipal Affairs

Background

- **To ensure continuous enhancement and improvement of Alberta's public safety system, the Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) conducts a formal Post Incident Assessment (PIA) after major events.**
- **The province produced PIAs after the 2011 Slave Lake fires and the 2013 Southern Alberta floods.**

Background

- **KPMG was contracted to complete the holistic PIA of the Fort McMurray wildfire on November 30, 2016.**
- **There were 21 recommendations across the framework.**
- **Work was already underway on 16 out of the 21 recommendations at the time of the report.**
- **Work is beginning on the other five recommendations.**

KPMG Review

Summary of Findings

- **The Government of Alberta (GOA) has learned from past events and has successfully addressed one of the most significant disasters in Canadian history. These PIAs have informed improvements to:**
 - Formalized Public Safety Governance
 - Prevention programming
 - Enhanced systems of support for local authorities
 - Enhanced emergency management training and exercises
 - Establishment of a Provincial Emergency Social Services Framework and formalized the Ministry of Human Services as lead
 - Mandated provincial use of Incident Command System (ICS) model
 - Improved Provincial Operations Center (POC) capacity and technology
 - Formalized Incident Management Teams
 - Launch of Alberta First Responder Radio Communications System (AFRRCS)
 - Implementation of Alberta Emergency Alert (AEA) system
 - Improved integration of provincial expertise for environmental and public health review prior to re-entry
 - Planning for re-entry and recovery

KPMG Review

Summary of Findings

- **Nevertheless, the province should strive to:**
 - Strengthen and continue investment in emergency prevention programs.
 - Improve public emergency awareness and preparedness.
 - Support local authorities with:
 - Complete and comprehensive incident response; and
 - Evacuation protocols and capacity.
 - Enhance the use of technology and analytics in emergency management processes.
 - Further operationalize the delivery of emergency social services supports within local and provincial authorities.

Background

- **Methodology - Stakeholder engagement was conducted from January to March, 2017 and included:**
 - Emergency management stakeholders:
 - Over 260 – interviews, working sessions, online sessions and surveys;
 - Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo;
 - Fort McMurray First Nation and the Fort McKay First Nation;
 - Supporting Alberta communities;
 - Federal partners including the Canadian Armed Forces;
 - Canadian Red Cross;
 - Industry; and
 - Community research of the region’s residents:
 - 100 residents; and
 - Over 5,300 respondents to online survey.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Prevention

- **Review the legislative framework of the *Emergency Management Act (EMA)***
 - A thorough analysis of the *Emergency Management Act, Public Health Act, Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act, and Occupational Health and Safety Act* within the Alberta Emergency Management Framework should be completed to understand their interplay, and the implications to stakeholders, during an emergency.
- **Response:** Work is beginning
 - A cross government working group will be established to conduct this analysis, in progress
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: AEMA
 - Supporting: Alberta Health, Environment and Parks, Agriculture and Forestry, and Labour

Recommendation 2

Prevention

- **Continue to invest in prevention programs**
 - The province and local authorities should continue to invest in programs that enhance mitigation and preparedness activities, and have the most significant impact and a positive return on disaster response and recovery costs.
- **Response: Ongoing**
 - \$45 million in FireSmart program funding to assist communities with wildfire prevention and protection activities (\$15 million a year increase, Budget 2017).
 - Ongoing work of Wildfire Urban Interface Working Group and emergency preparedness grants.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: Agriculture and Forestry for wildland fire prevention and FireSmart activities.
 - Supporting: Municipal Affairs and other select GOA departments for all other prevention activities.

Recommendation 3

Prevention

- **Standardize the format and processes for post-incident assessments**
 - A formal post-incident assessment process and guidelines for all organizations should be developed, along with a requirement for municipal-level reviews following major disasters.
- **Response:** Work is beginning
 - *EMA*, in consultation with stakeholders, will develop a post-incident assessment process with templates for future use.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: AEMA
 - Supporting: Consequence Management Officers (CMO) from other select GOA departments.

Recommendation 4

Prevention

- **Develop a Disaster Resiliency Strategy**
 - Alberta’s guidelines for developing Disaster Resiliency Strategies should strive to build capacity within individuals, households, and businesses; consider the components of prevention, preparedness, and recovery as integrated and community-centred; and foster connections between communities to adapt to future disasters.
- **Response: Ongoing**
 - Development of a disaster resiliency strategy underway. A working group will be established to examine the work outlined in the Sendai Framework and develop a strategy.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: AEMA
 - Supporting: Other GOA departments

Recommendation 5

Preparedness

- **Enhance investment in public awareness and engagement initiatives for emergency preparedness**
 - Building on the experience from the wildfire, work to build Albertans' understanding of their role in emergency preparedness.
- **Response: Ongoing**
 - Memorandum of Understanding with Canadian Red Cross underway to support public education.
 - Consultation with key stakeholders to develop/deliver in-school program.
 - Collaboration with ministry communications teams on improving existing emergency preparedness programs.
 - Alberta Emergency Alert enhancements and community training ongoing.
 - AB Ready Outreach Program in development.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: AEMA
 - Supporting: PAB, other select GOA departments, ministry communication teams

Recommendation 6

Preparedness

- **Clarify and document processes for legislative delegation of authority under the Alberta Emergency Plan (AEP)**
 - The AEP should better address how delegation works, when enacted, between the province, a local authority, and other stakeholders involved in a disaster response.
- **Response: Ongoing**
 - AEMA initiated a review of the delegation process
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: AEMA
 - Supporting: Municipal Affairs Legal Department

Recommendation 7

Preparedness

- **Scale the Hazard Identification Risk Assessment (HIRA) model to understand cumulative risk**
 - The HIRA model should be scaled to support local authorities and the province, consolidate information to improve awareness of cumulative risks, risk thresholds and potential for impact to critical infrastructure in a region or across the province.
- **Response: Ongoing**
 - Through Community Emergency Management Program (CEMP) and First Nations (FN) CEMP we have provided communities with HIRA model for their own risk assessments.
 - Created the Provincial All Hazard Risk Advisory Committee.
 - Continue to participate in Federal/Provincial/Territorial Cross Government Forum on Critical Infrastructure.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: Provincial All Hazard Risk Assessment Advisory Committee
 - Supporting: Justice and Solicitor General, other select GOA departments

Recommendation 8

Preparedness

- **Create resource and asset management system capabilities**
 - The province should invest in resource and asset management capabilities that allow tracking of personnel and resources as part of the Alberta DisasterLAN system (ABDLAN).
- **Response: Ongoing**
 - Developing response resource tracking capability within the POC.
 - Mutual Aid Alberta Resource Hub database pilot project underway.
 - Alberta DisasterLAN incident management technology is supporting the development of this process.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: AEMA
 - Supporting: Service Alberta, other select GOA departments

Recommendation 9

Preparedness

- **Develop a Provincial Emergency Evacuation Framework and evacuation model to provide enhanced decision-making capabilities at the provincial level**
 - The framework should describe evacuation planning processes, standards, and a philosophy. Existing analytic and modeling capabilities should be leveraged through a partnership between AEMA and AF, to develop wildfire evacuation modeling/simulation tools to support those that make evacuation decisions.
- **Response:** Work is beginning
 - A working group will be established to develop a guide that addresses the evacuation and re-entry of a community.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: AEMA
 - Supporting: Transportation, Municipal Affairs, Community and Social Services, Public Affairs Bureau, and Alberta Health

Recommendation 10

Preparedness

- **Build depth and capacity within local authorities to enable communities to support each other during emergencies**
 - Ongoing development of the of the provincial and Regional Incident Management Team (IMT) program would further promote resource depth and capacity in communities and enable AEMA to formally implement standards for the teams, deployment processes, and how they are received and integrated into a local authority's emergency operations.
- **Response: Ongoing**
 - Development of a multi-year/phased pilot program has commenced.
 - Capacity in place commencing 2017.
 - Continue to work closely with Canada Task Force 2, Alberta's all hazard disaster response team.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: AEMA
 - Supporting: Other GOA departments

Recommendation 11

Preparedness

- **Enhance internal communications interoperability with key stakeholders and the use of technology**
 - An Emergency Management Communications Interoperability Plan should be developed to address communications flow between all stakeholders during an emergency event.
 - The plan should leverage existing work and technologies, and promote the effective use of the Information Officer role per Incident Command System (ICS) to facilitate internal communications.
- **Response:** Ongoing
 - AFRRCS is working in collaboration with the Provincial Operations Centre to deliver and enhance broadband first responder communications.
 - AFRRCS continues to roll out and support its use and adoption.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: AEMA
 - Supporting: Service Alberta, and Agriculture and Forestry

Recommendation 12

Preparedness

- **Enhance existing public emergency communication approaches**
 - Public emergency communications approaches should be expanded to include accessible emergency communications, formal re-entry information practices, and outline how to leverage social media in emergencies.
- **Response: Ongoing**
 - Ongoing efforts to further integrate and enhance use of all forums in support of emergency management activities.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: Public Affairs Bureau (PAB)
 - Supporting: AEMA, Other GOA Ministry Communications Teams

Recommendation 13

Preparedness

- **Invest in and develop a state of the art Provincial Operations Centre facility**
 - To ensure that the province remains a leader in emergency response, the new facility must enable collaboration among partners through space design and supporting technology.
- **Response: Ongoing**
 - Project management team created.
 - \$125 million in funding confirmed in the 2017 through 2020 budgets.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: Infrastructure
 - Supporting: AEMA

Recommendation 14

Response

- **Mandate local authorities to adopt the Incident Command System (ICS) during response**
 - Building guidance and details around how ICS Canada is expected to be applied in Alberta will make it easier for local authorities and other organizations to understand and use ICS.
- **Response:** Ongoing
 - Field Officers continue to deliver ICS Canada training to communities.
 - AEMA continues to develop and deliver online ICS Canada training.
 - AEMA will continue to incentivize adoption of ICS Canada through grant programs.
 - AEMA has developed and continues to advance and refine All Hazards Incident Management Team (AHIMT) program.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: AEMA
 - Supporting: Agriculture and Forestry

Recommendation 15

Response

- **Formalize criteria and operational processes for de-escalation of the Provincial Operations Centre**
 - The Alberta Emergency Plan should be modified to clearly outline the mechanisms, triggers, and/or decision supports that would allow the province to de-escalate from Level 4 activation.
- **Response:** Ongoing
 - Generic criteria development ongoing
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: AEMA
 - Supporting: GOA departments (CMOs within the POC)

Recommendation 16

Response

- **Empower the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) to co-ordinate and deploy municipal firefighters during a response**
 - The OFC should be given the authority and appropriate resources to work with local authorities to create a provincial inventory of municipal firefighters (including wildland-urban interface trained professionals) that can be deployed during an emergency.
 - The OFC should be empowered to co-ordinate, deploy, and demobilize these municipal firefighters to support a provincially-declared State of Emergency, and local States of Emergency where needed.
- **Response: Ongoing**
 - The OFC is leading the development and implementation of a Wildland-Urban Interface capability in close collaboration with AF, and AEMA.
 - The POC in partnership with the OFC is developing a provincial database of firefighting resources and capabilities for rapid response and tracking.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: Municipal Affairs (OFC)
 - Supporting: Agriculture and Forestry

Recommendation 17

Response

- **Continue to operationalize the Provincial Emergency Social Services (PESS) Framework**
 - This would include a CMO position in the POC, leveraging common identity work underway within government, consideration for the development of a registration database, continue to work closely with the Canadian Red Cross and all other NGOs, and the development of permanent and scalable provincial emergency social programs.
- **Response:** Ongoing
 - PESS is co-located with the POC and is in the process of enhancing its operational processes and training.
 - Continue to define and develop scalable emergency social programs and services for Albertans impacted by disasters.
 - PESS is closely integrated with the Emergency Social Services Network Alberta and NGO Council of Alberta.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: Community and Social Services
 - Supporting: Other GOA departments

Recommendation 18

Stabilization

- **Build re-entry conditions and criteria into a guide that can be leveraged by local authorities**
 - Documentation and clear communication of guidelines to all stakeholders can lead to a more co-ordinated and collaborative approach to re-entry.
- **Response:** Work is beginning
 - A cross-government working group will be established to develop a guide that addresses key elements of the evacuation and re-entry of a community.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: AEMA
 - Supporting: Transportation, Municipal Affairs, Community and Social Services, Alberta Health

Recommendation 19

Stabilization

- **Expand the use of Rapid Damage Assessment technology and processes to authorities during disaster events**
 - The use of Rapid Damage Assessments during the wildfire was a positive practice that should continue; to enable this, supports to local authorities will be required.
- **Response: Work is beginning**
 - Municipal Affairs will formalize the use of rapid damage assessment teams.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: Municipal Affairs
 - Supporting: AEMA, Seniors and Housing

Recommendation 20

Recovery

- **Develop recovery plans within the context of resiliency**
 - In conjunction with Recommendation #4, the province should provide guidance on how recovery planning should incorporate aspects of disaster resiliency.
- **Response:** Ongoing
 - Development of a disaster resiliency strategy underway.
 - AEMA will establish a cross-government working group to enhance community resilience using recommendations outlined in the Sendai Framework as an opportunity to build back better.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: AEMA
 - Supporting: GOA

Recommendation 21

Recovery

- **Enhance the use of the AEMA Recovery Branch**
 - AEMA Recovery Branch should continue to build upon its capacity and capability through dedicated staff, who have lived experiences, to support recovery work with local authorities and the Provincial Task Force as required.
- **Response:** Ongoing
 - AEMA will continue to invest in the improvement and enhancement of the recovery branch.
- **Responsible organization:**
 - Lead: AEMA
 - Supporting: Service Alberta

Recommendation Implementation Proposal

- **Most recommendations have cross-government responsibilities**
- **Oversight and tracking provided by Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Safety Committee**
- **Implementation plans developed by respective lead ministries**
- **Cross-government working groups established**

Next Steps

- **Develop implementation plans**
- **Establish working groups**
 - Refine timelines
 - Complete analysis
 - Seek approval
 - Resource
 - Implement
- **Feedback to Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Safety Committee on progress (including delays) must occur on a regular basis.**