

Background: NWT Emergency Management Organization (EMO)

Roles and responsibilities

The EMO is established pursuant to the *Emergency Management Act* (the *Act*). It consists of the territorial EMO situated within the Public Safety Division of MACA and includes five regional EMOs situated in MACA regional offices and led by MACA regional superintendents. The Head of the Emergency Management Organization (HEMO), under the direction of the Minister, is responsible for the administration of the EMO.

EMO leads the activities of the GNWT in relation to emergency mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery and is the lead authority for the GNWT's emergency management program.

Pursuant to the *Act* the EMO shall:

- Lead the GNWT in the coordination of emergency management activities;
- Support the emergency management activities of local authorities;
- Coordinate or assist in the coordination of the response of the GNWT and public agencies to an emergency; and
- Exercise any other powers and perform any other duties as directed by the Minister for the purposes of the *Act*.

The EMO may:

- promote public awareness of matters related to emergency management;
- establish policies and programs respecting emergency management;
- conduct exercises and provide education and training related to emergency management;
- promote a common approach to emergency management, including the adoption of standards and best practices;
- review and recommend modifications to territorial and local authority emergency plans and programs;
- procure food, fuel, water, medicine, equipment, goods, materials and services of any nature or kind for the purposes of this *Act*;
- authorize, review, evaluate or approve surveys or studies of resources and facilities that may be used for the purposes of this *Act*;
- provide advice and assistance to local authorities in the development, implementation and maintenance of emergency programs and plans;
- make recommendations to the Minister respecting emergency management, including the creation and maintenance of emergency programs;
- authorize and require surveys or studies to identify and record actual or potential hazards, risks and vulnerabilities that could cause or exacerbate an emergency in all or part of the NWT; and
- advise the Minister on any matter concerning this *Act* or the regulations.

Territorial Emergency Operation Centre

In the event of an emergency, the EMO activates the Territorial Emergency Operation Centre (TEOC) to:

- coordinate the overall territorial response;
- ensure communications with appropriate Regional Emergency Operation Centres (REOCs);
- provide regular situational reports; and
- coordinate the involvement of other departments and key stakeholders.

EMO Response to COVID-19

TEOC was first activated in response to the COVID-19 global pandemic on March 13, 2020. Actions taken include:

- setting up isolation centres in Yellowknife, Inuvik, Hay River and Fort Smith;
- establishing checkpoints at NWT border crossings and implementing control and support measures;
- collaborating with HSS to obtain updates and risk level briefings;
- identifying preparedness requirements of departments; and
- working with communities to monitor for impacts, maintain situational awareness; and continue to support preparedness activities.