

## Post-Event Action Plan – Spring Freshet 2008

<b><u>Specified Findings</u></b>	
<p><b>Improved emergency management capacity in northwest New Brunswick / Emergency Management Focus</b></p>	<p>The departments of Public Safety (DPS) and Local Government (DLG) are working together with municipalities to develop improved emergency management plans. This is being done on a priority basis, beginning with the northwest region. Staff from New Brunswick Emergency Measures Organization (NB-EMO) have met with officials in this region over the past several months.</p> <p>NB-EMO will also conduct high-level risk assessments for each of the eight regions across the province, placing emphasis on the northwest.</p>
<p><b>Implementation of a ‘whole of government’ approach to emergency management</b></p>	<p>The newly-created Deputy Ministers’ Ad Hoc Committee on Security and Emergencies has an ongoing plan in place to respond in emergency and other situations. The committee is co-chaired by the deputy ministers of Public Safety and Health, and a formalized process for executive level co-ordination is being considered. The committee can be convened quickly as required, as was the case in September 2008 in preparation for a potential hurricane event.</p>
<p><b>Ensuring that senior government officials are prepared to discuss and implement precautionary measures quickly and efficiently</b></p>	<p>Deputy ministers are the appropriate officials for the approval of precautionary measures. Each department has a responsibility to step up with financial assistance in the event of an emergency. Therefore, DPS will formalize the process for briefing deputy ministers on matters where precautionary measures are recommended. It should be noted that the independent evaluation did not determine whether events would have unfolded any differently if this had happened during the 2008 flood.</p>

<b><u>Mitigation</u></b>	
<b>Improved public alerting and warning</b>	<p>NB-EMO is leading provincial efforts in this area, which are linked to a national effort. Interim actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adding local radio stations to the Provincial Warning System;</li> <li>• Authorizing Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) to issue warnings on behalf of municipalities; and</li> <li>• Modernizing CNB web services to enable self-subscription to provincial alerts.</li> </ul> <p>Some of these actions will take a longer amount of time to implement, and in the interim, NB-EMO and its partners will continue to monitor conditions closely. We will also focus on reminding the public to keep up to date on current water levels and other issues through our River Watch website.</p>
<b>Improved critical infrastructure sector alerting/warning</b>	<p>NB-EMO and the New Brunswick Security and Emergencies Directorate (NBSED) have now formalized an all-hazards risk assessment process, to ensure that risks to critical infrastructure and essential services are identified and communicated. The Provincial Critical Infrastructure Program provides risk assessment tools and works collaboratively with owner/operators on threat, risk and vulnerability assessments. NBSED will develop an associated training package.</p>
<b>Enhancements to the River Watch program</b>	<p>Surveying field work has been completed in Northwest NB and the Department of Environment is adapting a computer model to be used this spring that will allow forecasted river flows to be converted to water levels for communities along the Upper Saint John River. The Hydrology Center has identified a flood stage elevation for the communities from Connors to St. Leonard. A new tabular template has been developed for communication of flood stage and forecasted water levels for communities in Northwest NB. This new information will provide consistency in the type of forecast delivered all along the river length.</p> <p>With the additional enhancements of a water level forecast and an identified flood stage elevation; ENV, EMO, the Local Service Manager and residents of communities in the upper Saint John River will be able to better interpret and utilize the river forecast information in decision-making concerning risks associated with Saint John River flows.</p> <p>The provincial River Watch program is currently undergoing renewal, including improvement to the</p>

	<p>flood forecasting system, and improvements to flood risk mapping.</p> <p>The Department of Environment has committed \$800,000 over two years for improvements to capabilities at the River Forecast Centre. In addition, the Department of Public Safety has invested about \$500,000 over two years for imagery and light detection and ranging (LIDAR data), to develop a digital elevation model for the St. John River valley.</p> <p>We have acquired new high-resolution orthophotos and elevation data in areas affected by the 2008 flood. This data and the associated products will enable more accurate flood risk assessments and forecasting in the northwest.</p>
<p><b>Review of sensor maintenance program to ensure the reliability of coverage</b></p>	<p>The Department of Environment is working with Environment Canada’s Water Survey of Canada, the U.S. National Weather Service, the Province of Quebec and the State of Maine, with a view to improving our sensor networks and situational awareness of meteorological and hydrological risks.</p> <p>In addition, the Department of Environment is analyzing the feasibility of improving the existing sensor network. Priority will be given to those areas deemed to be at higher risk from anticipated climate change impacts, most notably the northwest region.</p>
<p><b>Status updates in relation to flood forecasting (24/7) and releasing a 72-hour forecast</b></p>	<p>River Watch typically runs flood models twice daily during high-risk periods, and generally, the accuracy of flood forecasting does not make it necessary to issue a revised forecast, as nothing has changed. However, to assist the public’s understanding of flood risk, Environment and NB-EMO are developing a user-friendly web site with flood risk maps, 24-hour and 48-hour forecasts, and real-time or near-real-time data from water gauges.</p> <p>River Watch already produces a 72-hour forecast, but it is not distributed publicly, as precipitation forecasts that far in advance are generally inaccurate. However, based on that forecast, River Watch spokespersons already provide a statement concerning risk, whether increasing, decreasing, or remaining the same.</p>
<p><b>Mitigation for existing structures located on flood plains; limited development in known flood-prone areas</b></p>	<p>The Department of Public Safety will lead work to determine the costs of mitigation, compared to the estimated future costs of repair and recovery, in areas with a history of flooding.</p> <p>The departments of Public Safety, Environment, and Local Government will work to improve public awareness, through improved flood risk mapping, forecasting and modelling services, which will be available online.</p>

	In addition, in order to mitigate future flood damage and associated repair and recovery costs, the departments of Environment and Local Government will lead work to develop guidelines for new construction in areas with a history of flooding.
<b>Preparedness</b>	
<b>Ensuring business continuity within the Government of New Brunswick</b>	<p>We recognize that business continuity planning should be an ongoing activity of government, with appropriate policy guidance, governance and accountability. This work will be done through the Deputy Ministers' Ad Hoc Committee on Security and Emergencies.</p> <p>Standards for emergency management and business continuity programs have improved in recent years, and NB-EMO will promote the use of a recognized program standard, and work with partners to develop a checklist for the assessment of municipal and departmental programs.</p>
<b>Increased and strategic staffing for NB-EMO and increased availability of augmentees in an emergency situation</b>	<p>The Department of Public Safety recently re-organized its structure, creating a new branch called Emergency Services. This will strengthen linkages between NB 9-1-1 and NB-EMO, leading to enhanced capacity and resources in an emergency situation.</p> <p>NB-EMO will also work with other government departments and agencies to identify, recruit and train additional staff to augment the Provincial and Regional Emergency Operations Centres during emergencies. We will identify further resources who may be available from other regions through our national memorandum of understanding, as well as international agreements.</p>
<b>Contingency plans and HR support for employees deployed to Joint Emergency Operations Centre (JEOC), and identification of a new location for JEOC</b>	<p>DPS has developed departmental policy on the employment of emergency services volunteers; this policy will be considered as a model for the public service. Public Safety and the Office of Human Resources will develop policy to govern temporary assignments during emergencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms and conditions of temporary assignments;</li> <li>• Job descriptions and training required;</li> <li>• Responsibilities of employers and employees; and</li> <li>• Administration guidelines.</li> </ul> <p>We know that for employees to be able to continue to work under adverse conditions, they require support. The DM Committee will provide direction regarding the development of an Employee Support Plan for emergency situations, including post-event debriefings and counselling. We will continue to provide support to employees through the Emergency Family Assistance Plan, as well as the Critical Incident Stress Management program.</p>

	<p>Recognizing that we need to identify an improved location for emergency operations, the Department of Public Safety will continue to work with Public Safety Canada on opportunities for co-location of agency offices and a joint emergency operations centre.</p>
<p><b>Development of a flood contingency plan and ensuring the continuity of government</b></p>	<p>Assessing risk is a necessary prerequisite for developing contingency plans. As part of the Climate Change Action Plan, government has committed to seek partnerships with the federal government in opportunities to undertake a provincial risk assessment which will look at risks in all parts of the province that would be mitigated with adaptation strategies, with particular attention to coastal areas and inland waters. The departments of Public Safety and Environment will ensure that the provincial risk assessment examines flood risk, including the additional risk posed by the anticipated effects of climate change. We are already working to improve flood risk mapping, with emphasis on the Madawaska region.</p> <p>The departments of Public Safety and Environment will ensure that the provincial risk assessment examines flood risk, including the additional risk posed by the anticipated effects of climate change. We are already working to improve flood risk mapping, with emphasis on the Madawaska region.</p> <p>In light of the potential for future floods, major weather events such as hurricanes and ice storms and the possibility of an influenza pandemic, government departments and agencies will develop plans to ensure the continuity of government operations in emergencies. The Deputy Ministers' Ad Hoc Committee on Security and Emergencies will provide oversight, and NB-EMO will co-ordinate work and integrate the individual plans into a comprehensive provincial continuity plan.</p>
<p><b>Information technology, archives and records management</b></p>	<p>The departments of Supply and Services and Public Safety will continue to work to establish guidelines for the identification and classification of mission critical information systems.</p> <p>The Department of Supply and Services will establish policies for the safeguarding of essential records and digital information. Each department and agency will address these requirements in their respective business continuity plans.</p>
<p><b>Pre-event planning</b></p>	<p>The Department of Public Safety, through NB-EMO and NBSED, monitors emerging threats and assess the risk to: people, property and the environment; critical infrastructure and essential services; and continuity of government operations. This process is used to identify priorities for contingency</p>

	<p>planning. This process worked well in 2008, and the public was reassured that their safety was a priority of government, and that plans were in place to assist them. This process has been identified as a best practice and will be further developed.</p>
<p><b>Development of a comprehensive public education program</b></p>	<p>CNB is already working to enhance its web services with a view to offering services such as news feeds and automated alerts. Public Safety will continue to support and work with partners and seek opportunities to enhance the national 72 Hours Campaign, which promotes public awareness and individual and family emergency preparedness.</p> <p>It is important to note that NB-EMO and CNB work very closely to communicate risk to the public. CNB maintains a web portal that aggregates risk and hazard information, public alerts and advice for emergencies of all types. Each department with emergency responsibilities contributes to this effort, conducting seasonal awareness campaigns for flooding (River Watch) and wildfires.</p>
<p><b>Establishment of a government-wide emergency management training and exercise program</b></p>	<p>NB-EMO will develop an orientation course, a planning course and an operations course, designed to prepare provincial staff for their emergency roles. Priority will be given to staff responsible for departmental emergency planning, and those assigned to the provincial emergency operations centres.</p>
<p><b>Establishment of exercises to test communications and procedures</b></p>	<p>The Department of Public Safety co-ordinates the provincial major exercise program, including inter-agency exercises, with our emergency management partners, including Communications New Brunswick, NB Power, National Defence, Public Safety Canada and the RCMP. NB-EMO will continue to conduct inter-agency emergency exercises annually. These are normally conducted annually, and typically involve organizations such as National Defence, Public Safety Canada, the RCMP, neighbouring provinces and states, local governments and utilities. DPS will ensure that such exercises place emphasis on inter-agency communications and co-ordination.</p>

<b><u>Response</u></b>	
<b>Further development of all-hazard risk and impact assessment tools, processes and procedures</b>	NB-EMO and NBSED will formalize a process for pre-event threat, risk, hazard and vulnerability analysis; this will be integrated into the assessment function within the Provincial Incident Management System.
<b>Establishing responsibility for the closure of government services in an emergency situation</b>	The Office of Human Resources has assumed the lead role in developing a policy and procedures for the emergency closure of provincial government offices, and related employee and stakeholder communications.
<b>Having key stakeholders such as Technical Inspection Services represented in the Joint Emergency Operations Centre (JEOC)</b>	All agencies involved in emergency operations will be represented at the Operations Centre. The recovery plan will require that all those agencies with roles in recover will be represented in the recovery operations centre.
<b>Availability of bilingual dedicated spokespersons for JEOC operations</b>	<p>The Department of Public Safety provided the official spokespersons throughout the flood season, because of the ongoing requirement for subject matter expertise. Risk assessments were in fact provided. CNB will work with government departments and agencies to identify and train additional staff to serve as spokespersons, so that there is not an undue burden on key officials with managerial responsibilities.</p> <p>In addition, the recent creation of the Emergency Services branch within DPS will increase the capacity and resources available to respond to media requests.</p>

<b>Operational and administrative improvements</b>	Several operational and administrative processes were analyzed and will be improved. Some of these include: a more strategic procedure for operational conference calls; a review of operational procedures for administrative support; further development of the after-action review process created by NB-EMO; and the establishment of a shared digital map and imagery database, to improve information sharing between NB-EMO, SNB, Environment and other partners.
<b>Using available support from other provinces</b>	A national memorandum of understanding on inter-jurisdictional mutual aid has been developed, and we expect approval this year. NB-EMO will continue to work with our New England and Eastern Canadian partner jurisdictions to further develop cross-border assistance protocols.
<b><u>Recovery</u></b>	
<b>Standard operating procedures for recovery operations, training, and health and safety inspection</b>	NB-EMO will develop a comprehensive provincial recovery program reflecting the best practices and lessons learned from the 2008 recovery operations. Work will include updates to policies, procedures and training for Recovery Planning, Damage Assessment, Call Centre Services, Health and Safety Inspections and Disaster Financial Assistance.
<b>Improved public information on the process for re-connection of power</b>	This situation resulted from a lack of public understanding of the inspection process. Public Safety will work with NB Power to develop a common approach to communications about electrical safety/disconnection/reconnection.
<b>Disaster Financial Assistance and assessment of mitigation allowance</b>	Over 60 clients submitted proposals for mitigation projects. Government assistance was limited to an additional 15 per cent of the amount of structural damages. However, many clients may have spent more money on flood-proofing measures. Therefore, Public Safety will review the costs and benefits of the mitigation projects approved under the 2008 recovery program, with a view to making recommendations for improvement to DFA policies and administrative arrangements.