



# EMERGENCY MANAGER

The Official Publication of IAEM Canada, EMLCanada, ARISE Canada and DEMCON | Issue 2 2025

## The Knock on the Door

Could 'Good Fire' Practices Reduce the Need for Costly, Painful Evacuations?

### The Critical Role of the Private Sector

Business's Inclusion in Disaster Management Saves Lives

### Behind the Scenes

Training and Competency Development Key in Emergency Management

### Stories of Resilience - Voices From Jasper

Community Resilience in the Wake of Wildfire

### Stronger Together

Indigenous-Led Collaboration Driving Emergency Management in Atlantic Canada

### Navigating the Shadows

Trends, Threats and Competency in Mass Fatality Management and Disaster Victim Identification

### PLUS: Ontario Disaster and Emergency Management Conference

A Stage for the Voices Shaping Ontario's Emergency Future





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## Welcome Message from IAEM Canada



**By Sam Roberts,**  
President,  
IAEM Canada

# Experienced Professionals Ready to Support New Members

One of the greatest strengths of our profession is the bond between those beginning their journey and those who have dedicated years to this field. Emergency management is at its best when experience is shared, curiosity is encouraged and lessons are passed forward. Mentorship is not an extra feature of our work. It is the foundation of professional growth and resilience.

To those who are new to the field, welcome. You have entered a profession that is demanding, complex and deeply meaningful. You will learn about hazards, community safety, cross-sector coordination and the human side of leadership under pressure. At times the scope may feel overwhelming, but remember you are not alone. Across Canada, experienced professionals stand ready to support you, answer your questions and guide your development.

For those with years of service, your role as mentors has never been more vital. Our operating environment is changing quickly. Technology, climate change and shifting social expectations are reshaping what it means to prepare for and respond to emergencies.

New members bring fresh perspectives, but they need the grounding influence of experience.



Sharing stories, lessons learned and even mistakes ensures that the next generation develops both technical skill and sound judgment. Every conversation, every bit of advice is an investment in resilience.

IAEM Canada is committed to fostering this exchange. At colleges and universities nationwide, students are eager to connect with professionals and to apply their classroom learning in practical ways. Through projects, events and symposiums, we are creating opportunities for emerging practitioners to gain confidence while experienced leaders contribute their expertise.

Professional development remains central to our mission. Training, webinars and workshops are



designed to bring together members at every stage of their careers. These gatherings do more than teach skills - they create natural opportunities for mentorship and for the building of professional networks that endure long after the session ends.

It is important to remember that mentorship does not only occur through formal programs. Some of the most powerful lessons are shared in casual conversations after a meeting, during a coffee break or in the middle of an exercise.

These moments may seem small, but they often shape careers and build lasting bonds of trust. I encourage every member to seek out these opportunities and to embrace them.

The future of our profession depends on both the enthusiasm of new members and the wisdom of experienced practitioners. Mentorship is the bridge that connects those strengths. It ensures knowl-

edge is preserved, creativity is encouraged and resilience becomes part of our collective identity.

To new members, know that you are welcome and that your contributions matter. To our experienced colleagues, thank you for the generosity you show in guiding others. Together, you form the past, present and future of emergency management in Canada.

As you finish reading this issue, I encourage you to take one simple step: reach out. If you are new, connect with someone whose work you admire. If you are experienced, offer to guide or share insight with someone starting out. These connections, big or small, strengthen our association and our profession in lasting ways.

It is an honour to serve as your president and to see how mentorship continues to build resilience across our community. 🍁

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# The Knock on the Door

## Could 'Good Fire' Practices Reduce the Need for Costly, Painful Evacuations?

By Donald Benham

**S**helley Napier urges all Canadians to hope for the best, but always, always prepare for the worst.

During her 30-plus years of managing emergencies for the Manitoba government, Napier saw people's lives upended in a moment by tornadoes, blizzards, train derailments, floods and fires, with many of those events causing mass evacuations.

"It may seem to some people that when you are evacuating, you simply get in your car and go. It's very easy. What's the big deal? Having been in this business for more than three decades, I can tell you that evacuations take a lot of skill, a lot of pre-planning, a lot of practice and a lot of training," Napier said.

"What do you take with you? I talked to individuals that said they got a knock on the door to evacuate and they raced around gathering useless things and putting them in a bag. When they got to where they were safe, they asked themselves, 'What do I need with cookbooks?' " she said.

While the government has an important role to play in emergencies, people have to look out for themselves, Napier said.

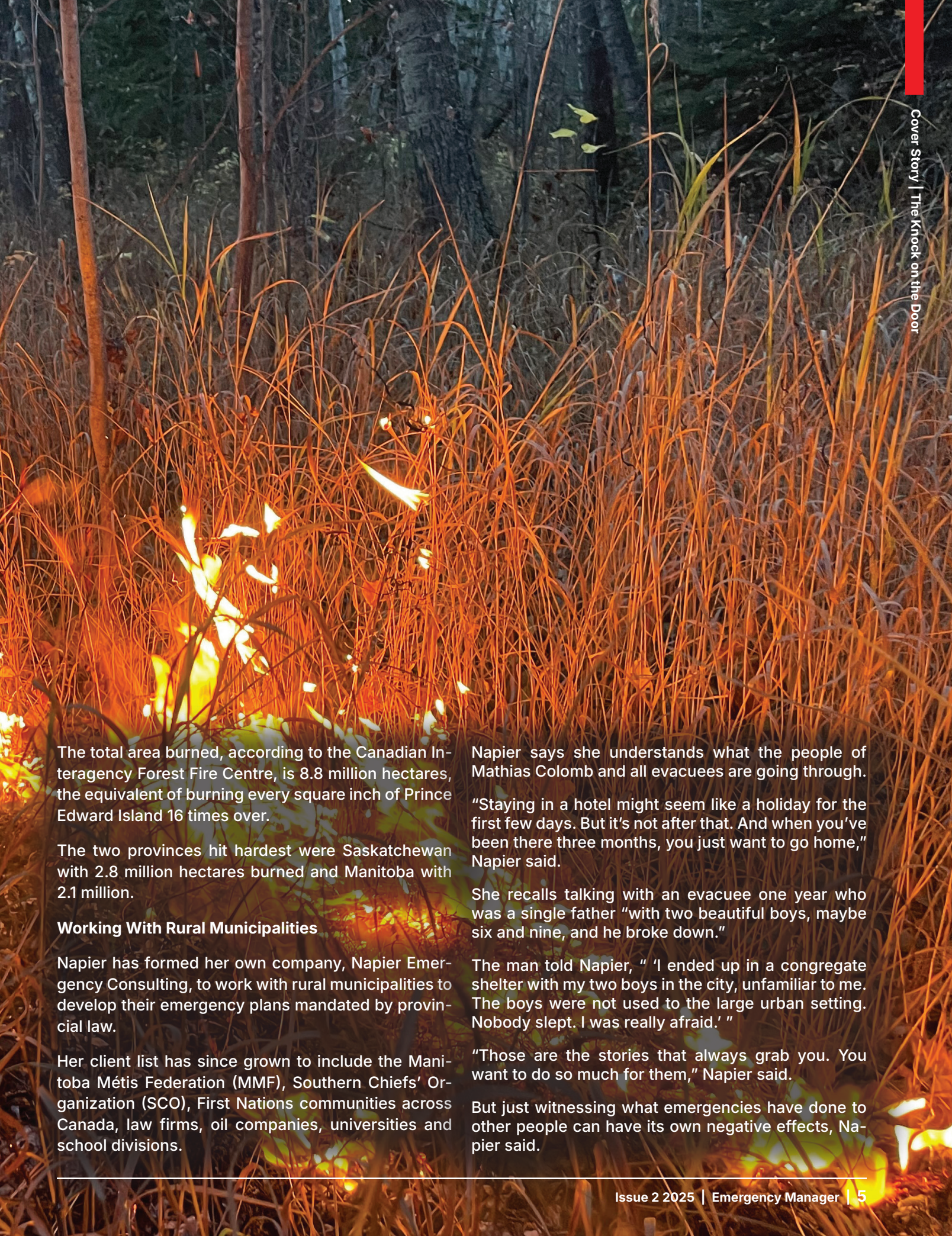
### A 72-hour Kit is Vital

"You cannot wait for a government to keep you safe. We've got to do what we can first. Do you have a 72-hour kit? If you do, what's in it? If you have elders in your family or people that are disabled, do they have a buddy system?" she asked.

That knock on the door came for tens of thousands of Canadians last summer as wildfires burned from Conception Bay in Newfoundland & Labrador to the Regional District of Nanaimo in British Columbia to Fort Providence in the Northwest Territories.

The 1,000-plus residents of Mathias Colomb Cree Nation, more than 800 kilometres north of Winnipeg, were among the 20,000 people evacuated in Manitoba.





The total area burned, according to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre, is 8.8 million hectares, the equivalent of burning every square inch of Prince Edward Island 16 times over.

The two provinces hit hardest were Saskatchewan with 2.8 million hectares burned and Manitoba with 2.1 million.

### **Working With Rural Municipalities**

Napier has formed her own company, Napier Emergency Consulting, to work with rural municipalities to develop their emergency plans mandated by provincial law.

Her client list has since grown to include the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO), First Nations communities across Canada, law firms, oil companies, universities and school divisions.

Napier says she understands what the people of Mathias Colomb and all evacuees are going through.

"Staying in a hotel might seem like a holiday for the first few days. But it's not after that. And when you've been there three months, you just want to go home," Napier said.

She recalls talking with an evacuee one year who was a single father "with two beautiful boys, maybe six and nine, and he broke down."

The man told Napier, " 'I ended up in a congregate shelter with my two boys in the city, unfamiliar to me. The boys were not used to the large urban setting. Nobody slept. I was really afraid.' "

"Those are the stories that always grab you. You want to do so much for them," Napier said.

But just witnessing what emergencies have done to other people can have its own negative effects, Napier said.





Left to right: Chief Cornell McLean, Lake Manitoba First Nation; Shelley Napier, Managing Director of Napier Emergency Consulting; Chief Cameron Catcheway, Skownan First Nation; and Grand Chief Cathy Merrick, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs in May 2024.



Shelley Napier at Fort Good Hope



Shelley Napier at June MAMEC conference

"I recognized in my meeting with that young man with his children, I couldn't get it out of my mind. When you have that, hour after hour, day after day, it's vicarious trauma. How do we take care of that? So it's really important that we build into our programs a way to care for the caregivers," she said.

### A Long and a Rough Ride

Chief Gordie Bear of Mathias Colomb Cree Nation opened his

heart as he talked about the burden to his people of more than four months living away from home due to wildfires near their community.

"It's been a long road, a long and a rough ride. We struggled through sickness, mental breakdowns, lost loved ones. We've got to get home. Our children are suffering. We're suffering," Bear told a news conference posted

on YouTube by APTN in early September.

"Comfort is not easy to find when you're in a concrete jungle. We find comfort at home in a bush, amongst the trees, the rocks, the water. Listen to the water. So peaceful. Here you hear traffic zooming by . . . trucks, trains, jet planes, not the birds. So heart-breaking," Bear said.

Bear survived residential school, but calls his experience of the wildfire and the evacuation "just as painful. Today, I go through that pain of missing home. My backyard - it burned. Hear us out and help us get home, please."

### "Our Hearts Are With All Evacuees"

National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak of the Assembly of First Nations told the news conference she "stands with Chief Bear and his community. This community wants to go home. We also have to say that our hearts are with all evacuees that are still out there evacuated and as you return home."

Nepinak, born and raised in Pinaymootang First Nation, Man., said she remembers the effects of a wildfire on a nearby community in 2011.

"Our community got to go home a lot quicker than other communities. There was another community there that had devastating effects because their evacuation was far too many years," Nepinak said.

"It was hurtful to our people and I don't want to see that happen to Mathias Colomb. I know that it's been 100 days already - 100 days too long," she said.

Bear and Nepinak urged Manitoba Hydro to speed their return home by providing a generator as



Chief Gordie Bear





Dr. Amy Cardinal Christianson



a temporary source of electricity while power lines into the community are being repaired.

### Indigenous Teachings Invaluable

Indigenous elders teach that there is “good fire,” Dr. Amy Cardinal Christianson, Senior Fire Advisor for the Indigenous Leadership Initiative, told host Rosanna Deerchild of CBC Radio’s Unreserved in June.

A paper Christianson co-authored in the *International Journal of Wildland Fire* found that while only five per cent of Canada’s population identifies as Indigenous, more than 40 per cent of the wildfire evacuations in recent years involved Indigenous communities.

There would be much less need to evacuate people and Canada’s forests would be healthier if Indigenous teachings were incorporated into how we deal with fire, Christianson told Emergency Manager in a recent interview.

“Good fire is when we use fire on the landscape to achieve good cultural objectives,” Christianson said.

Properly managed, good fire can improve berry patches, boost the production of medicinal plants, increase grass growth and clean out areas “so that deer and moose and other animals we hunt are able to travel better and eat more.”

In northern communities, people will burn the thick matted grass in fields.

“It acts as a layer of insulation for the frost that’s in the ground. When we burn that, it turns that surface black, which then soaks up more heat from the sun, which melts the frost out of the ground sooner. You get a much longer growing season in the North, which is important to us.”

As early as 1610 in what was then the English colony of Newfoundland, thousands of years of Indigenous practices were outlawed by the settlers who didn’t understand their wisdom, Christianson said.

### Healthy Forests Were Replaced

The healthy mosaic of forests in pre-contact times were replaced by forests of only one kind of tree. Those forests are easier to cut down for timber, but they are also far more vulnerable to disease and fire, she said.

“Our forests in Canada are fire-dependent. We have to have fire. We’ll never be able to not have fire in forests in Canada,” Christianson said.

Indigenous cultural burning practices are slowly gaining acceptance, but Christianson had to endure racist comments when she began spreading her knowledge 20 years ago.

While Christianson conceded the possibility that a cultural burn might accidentally develop into a wildfire, she said Indigenous people deliberately choose locations and times of year with natural fire protection, such as late spring, when there is still some snow on the ground.

The best long-term solution to preventing mass evacuations and the fires that cause them is to put more funding and responsibility in the hands of the Indigenous Canadians who know how to steward the land, Christianson said.

“It’s very stark. About five per cent of the funding goes to Indigenous communities and of that almost 80 per cent goes to recovery post-fire. There’s nothing on the preventive or mitigating side,” she said.

“We want to focus on healthy forests, but that takes a massive power shift. We still haven’t seen an actual power shift or a funding shift, in terms of those practices.

“The frustration was really palpable this year, with Indigenous communities just saying, ‘This is enough. We’re not able to make decisions about the forests around us.’

“We’re completely underfunded in terms of emergency management, yet we’re always the ones who are bearing the brunt of these decisions that other people are making for us, causing all these evacuations,” she said. 🍁





# Ontario Disaster and Emergency Management Conference

## A Stage for the Voices Shaping Ontario's Emergency Future

Nicole Pinto, PC Chair, DEMCON Program and Readiness Manager, Ontario Emergency Medical Assistance Team

Photo Credit: Michael Nisim Productions

**A**s Ontario confronts the accelerating pace of climate disasters, public health threats, cyberattacks and infrastructure interruptions, one thing has become clear: emergency management can no longer be reactive, fragmented or siloed. It must be adaptive, inclusive and forward-thinking.

Enter DEMCON - the Ontario Disaster & Emergency Management Conference - in Toronto.

More than just another conference, DEMCON is emerging as a crucial platform for emergency management professionals, government leaders, researchers and community organizations to not only share lessons learned but to shape the province's collective future.

DEMCON is Ontario's premier emergency management conference

and has occurred annually since 2018. It is a two-day event that brings together more than 300 delegates from the greater emergency management community who participate in enthralling storytelling, insightful knowledge-sharing and vital relationship-building opportunities.

The conference is not just a place for learning and networking, but also provides a space to build on each other's experiences and feel a sense of community with like-minded individuals.

### Our Program Matters

DEMCON offers a breadth of choices when it comes to learning avenues - from keynotes, concurrent sessions, panel discussions to exercises, roundtables and workshops. We have it all!

The program is carefully curated by our planning committee, who are

emergency management professionals working in various sectors by day and association partners representatives by night. You might be picturing masked vigilantes at this point - \*wink wink\*.

This special partnership consists of the following membership - the Ministry of Emergency Preparedness and Response, the International Association of Emergency Managers Canada: Ontario Region, the Canadian Red Cross, Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, York University's Disaster and Emergency Management Student's Association (DEMSA), Centre International de Formation des Autorités et Leaders (CIFAL) York and the Canadian Journal of Emergency Management, supported by our conference organizers J&J Expositions.

We are honoured to have the backing of our provincial entity in the



Ministry of Emergency Preparedness and Response, who are not only on the planning committee, but also will deliver a keynote address and provide insights during keynote sessions.

### Five Components of Emergency Management

The general theme of the conference revolves more around knowledge-sharing based on the five components of emergency management - prevention, mitigation, planning, response and recovery - and networking amongst peers.

However, as the program develops each year, more specific themes present themselves. A wide array of themes have been prominent in past conferences.

These include:

- Climate adaptation and infrastructure resilience;
- Community-based emergency planning;
- Mental health in disaster recovery;
- Crisis communication and misinformation;
- Indigenous-led emergency response frameworks;
- Urban versus rural response capacity;
- Mass casualty and mass fatality planning;
- Cybersecurity and critical infrastructure threats.

The program for 2025 highlights community resilience in planning and response, harnessing the world of artificial intelligence (AI), community engagement for preparedness planning and building and assessing resiliency and response through data and standards.

These themes are brought to life by our valued speakers, who do more than deliver information.

These individuals provide insight, leadership and provocation. They inspire trust and challenge complacency. At DEMCON, speakers act as knowledge anchors - translating field experience into forward motion. They bring their best practices, vision and learning forth.

Delegates who attend DEMCON 2025 will gain value from four renowned keynotes, 14 concurrent sessions, two in-depth workshops, one panel discussion and six interactive roundtables.

### Days Will Begin and End with a Keynote

Each conference day will begin and end with a keynote, with a plethora of learning avenues from concurrent sessions to panel discussions to workshops slotted in-between.

The 2025 program will begin and end with two prominent figures in emergency and continuity management. Regina Phelps, a certified emergency manager and president of EMS Solutions, will open the conference, sharing her knowledge on how to plan and prepare for a chaotic world built on uncertainty.

From her extensive knowledge in crisis management, pandemic planning and exercise design, Phelps will discuss how things such as global insecurity impact an organization and how to prepare accordingly.

The conference will close with Mark Hoffman, a certified business continuity professional (CBCP) and president of Anesis Consulting Group Inc., who will impart knowledge on how AI can be integrated into resilience strategies.

Wouldn't you want to know how to utilize AI to predict emerging threats or to enable rapid response?



Nicole Pinto, PC Chair, DEMCON Program and Readiness Manager, Ontario Emergency Medical Assistance Team

Nicole is currently the DEMCON Planning Committee Chair, and has been serving on the Committee for at least six years. She also serves on the Technical Committee for the CSA Z1600: Emergency and Continuity Management Program Standard. Previously, Nicole spent just over eight years volunteering on the Board of Directors with the Ontario Association of Emergency Managers, serving in roles as the Directors of Partnerships and Education, as well as Vice President. For her full-time duties, Nicole is the Program and Readiness Manager for the Ontario Emergency Medical Assistance Team, operated under Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre's Centre for Prehospital Medicine. Prior to this, her emergency management and business continuity experience included roles within various levels of government, such as the Health System Emergency Management Branch at the Ministry of Health, York Region Public Health, Halton Region Health Department, the Cities of Burlington and Vaughan, and Quality and Risk with the Central Community Care Access Centre. She has over 10 years of experience in the field, with a Master of Arts in Disaster and Emergency Management from Royal Roads University, Certificate in Emergency Management from York University and is certified as an Associate Business Continuity Professional through the Disaster Recovery Institute (Canada).



Considering he is known as a global leader in the business continuity and resilience consulting field, Hoffman's keynote is just what you need.

Slotted between the two aforementioned keynotes will be an array of speakers who will provide thought-provoking and informative lessons stemming from research and lessons learned.

Under the umbrella of community engagement for preparedness, Tim Conrad, a public relations professional with years of experience, will discuss how community engagement will lead to a deeper understanding of why residents hold back from being prepared.

Magda Sulzycki, an organizational resilience expert with over 15 years of experience, will during her presentation *How Did We Really Do? Using Data to Grade Disaster Response* discuss how using metrics in after-action reviews will create concrete improvements.

We cannot forget our lessons learned from specific emergencies that have taken place throughout the year.

Grant Durfey, the community emergency management coordinator (CEMC) and manager of emergency management for the County of Simcoe, will walk us through



the preparedness and response phases, including working with over a dozen stakeholders during the severe ice storm that occurred in late March/early April.

These presentations will provide us with many insightful takeaways!

DEMCON is not just the place to be for seasoned veterans to share their stories, ideas and teachings, but is a place where newer faces to the field can share their viewpoints and research.

Larissa Parekh, an emergency management specialist with the City of Mississauga, will bring her personal story to life and showcase how she has been able to utilize her experience to create a community-centred model to public



education for Mississauga's emergency management program.

In addition to Parekh, Talia Short, a York University Master of Disaster & Emergency Management (MDEM) student, along with her professor, Dr. Jack Rozdilsky, will walk us through the lessons learned from the management of the Taylor Swift Era's Tour concert in Toronto to better prepare us for other mega events.

These are just some of the session highlights from the conference!

### Perks, Relationships and Fun

DEMCON is more than a place that provides learning - there is a lot of fun to be had! Dan and April Joyce, J&J Expositions, are an incredible father-daughter duo who run the show - their hospitality is second to none.



**Regina Phelps**  
Certified Emergency Manager/  
President of EMS Solutions



**Mark Hoffman**  
Certified Business Continuity  
Professional/President of  
Anesis Consulting Group



**Tim Conrad**  
Public Relations Professional



**Magda Sulzycki**  
Organizational Resilience  
Expert





**Grant Durfey**  
Community Emergency  
Management Coordinator/  
Manager of Emergency  
Management for the County of  
Simcoe



**Larissa Parekh**  
Emergency Management  
Specialist,  
City of Mississauga



**Talia Short**  
York University Master  
of Disaster & Emergency  
Management Student



**Jack Rozdilsky**  
York University Master  
of Disaster & Emergency  
Management Professor

From friendly smiles and festivities to the goodies in the delegate bags, you know that you are well taken care of. Conference festivities start with a bang with great food and connection at the Welcome Reception the night before Day 1.

If you think that the Welcome Reception sounds like fun, then you do not want to miss the Evening Social that occurs on Night 1, which, again, provides a great connection with peers and tends to go late into the night.

There are also numerous networking opportunities over the two conference days, with a long morning, lunch and afternoon break on each day.

This is an excellent opportunity to hop by each of the conference's top vendors' tables and take a peek at the products and services that are available to support your all-important work. It is also a great way to get goodies - because who does not want freebies?

Emergency flashlight/keychain/bottle opener anyone? But if having meaningful discussions with your favourite speaker is more your thing, then the dedicated speakers' lunch is where you want to be.

Last, but not least, DEMCON gives a nod to students with the addition

## At DEMCON, speakers act as knowledge anchors - translating field experience into forward motion.

**Nicole Pinto, PC Chair, DEMCON  
Program and Readiness Manager,  
Ontario Emergency Medical Assistance Team**

of a student-specific program session, enriching the experience of those newer to the field.

Still unsure of whether to attend DEMCON? Check the website, [www.CRTDEMCON.ca](http://www.CRTDEMCON.ca), out for yourself!

### Two Conferences for the Price of One

An added bonus for delegates is that you get access to two conferences for the price of one.

Continuity and Resilience Today (CRT) is being held at the same place and time as DEMCON, so delegates have complimentary access to the CRT program as well - this increases the combined sessions to 35!

Delegates will also have the opportunity to listen to sessions they were not able to attend in person for a specific time period post-conference through on demand - this is also a great way to access most of the sessions from the conference if you are not able to attend in person at all, although we want to see you there!

Building relationships, learning from each other and growing ideas to safeguard communities is what this field is about. The Ontario Disaster and Emergency Management Conference is the place you want to be.

Come for the content, keep coming back for the connections!

Hope to see you in 2026! 🍁

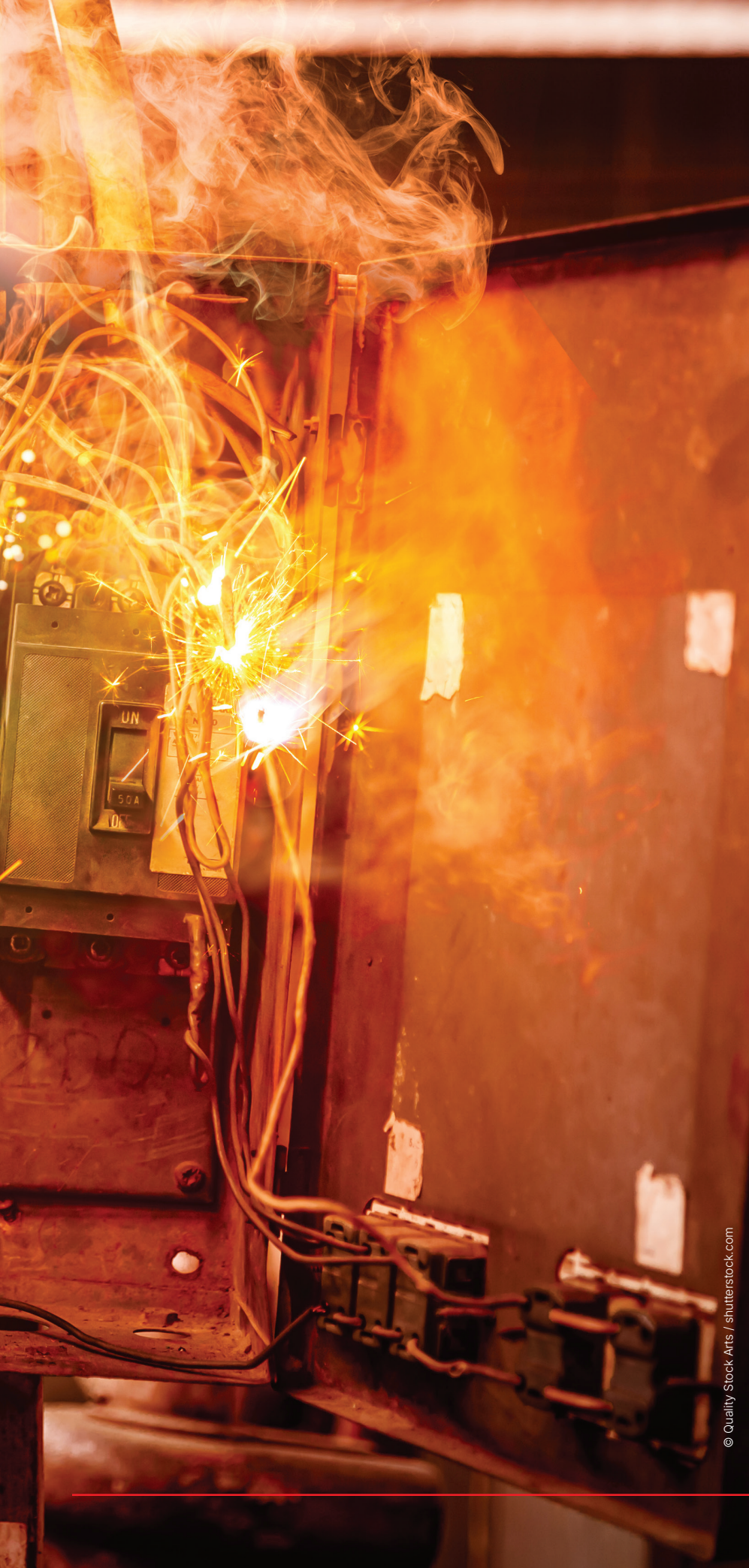


# Navigating the Shadows

Trends, Threats and Competency in Mass Fatality Management and Disaster Victim Identification

By Chris Kiez, President, Solusyion





In an era marked by escalating uncertainties, mass fatality management (MFM) and disaster victim identification (DVI) stand as critical pillars of emergency response. Low-frequency, high-consequence events such as pandemics, extreme weather disasters, terrorist attacks and industrial accidents pose profound challenges that can overwhelm systems designed for routine operations.

Canada has faced back-to-back years of unprecedented wildfires, floods and heat events, costing billions and placing severe strain on emergency systems. Projections suggest that both the frequency and severity of such events will continue to grow as climate change intensifies.

Globally, the World Economic Forum's *2025 Global Risks Report* warns of biological hazards and manmade catastrophes, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive preparedness. Canada faces parallel challenges. Federal assessments highlight the growing risks from natural disasters and terrorism, reflecting a broader international trend.

While such events are rare, their impact can be catastrophic with fatalities ranging from dozens to thousands. They demand responses that are rapid, coordinated, ethical and precise. Preserving dignity, providing closure for families and maintaining public trust are essential outcomes of effective disaster management.

### Performing Under Extreme Pressure

At the heart of successful MFM and DVI lies competency. This is more than procedural knowledge; it is the ability to perform under extreme pressure. Competency includes recovery of remains from hazardous scenes, precise



identification through DNA, fingerprints, or odontology, mortuary operations such as autopsies and storage, cultural sensitivity to honour diverse burial practices and ethical decision making when resources are scarce.

In mass casualty settings, responders must manage biohazards while maintaining a strict chain of custody. Any lapse risks misidentification which erodes confidence and trust.

Competency also enables interoperability across agencies and jurisdictions. Standardization through shared protocols reduces errors while respect for victims and survivors upholds public trust. When lapses occur, such as delayed identifications or disregard for cultural practices, the result can deepen grief and spark public outrage as witnessed after the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. In high consequence environments, where seconds matter and emotions are heightened, competent teams mitigate trauma, use resources efficiently and maintain legal compliance.

Frameworks provide the structure for building and sustaining competency. Internationally, the INTERPOL DVI Guide sets standards for multidisciplinary identification processes. The World Health Organization has issued guidelines for ethical handling and surge capacity in mass fatality management.

### Planning Coordinated Across All Levels

In Canada, provincial coroner guidance, such as British Columbia's Mass Fatality Response Plan, aligns with federal requirements under the Emergency Management Framework, ensuring planning is coordinated across all levels.

## Competency is the foundation of effective mass-fatality management and disaster-victim identification.

Chris Kiez, President, Solusyon

Training pathways bridge the gap from awareness to tested performance. Foundational courses introduce essentials such as scene safety and basic forensics, often delivered through local emergency management or public health programs.

Intermediate training develops technical skills in victim identification and morgue operations, supported by provincial agencies or organizations like the Canadian Red Cross.

Advanced leadership courses prepare participants for Emergency Operations Center roles, emphasizing strategic decision making. These are offered by Public Safety Canada, the Justice Institute of British Columbia and Canadian universities with emergency management programs.

The sources of training are diverse. Local agencies focus on practical drills. Provincial and federal organizations ensure policy alignment and integration. Non-governmental organizations contribute global best practices while universities provide evidence-based curricula. Together, they form a layered system that develops individuals



Chris Kiez,  
President,  
Solusyon,  
Retired RCMP/Ottawa Police  
Service

from foundational skills to leadership readiness.

### Exercises cultivate competency

Exercises are equally vital for cultivating competency, following a deliberate progression from discussion to full simulation. Tabletop exercises allow teams to analyze scenarios in a low-pressure environment

and identify planning gaps. Drills test specific functions such as recovery or documentation. Functional exercises simulate command and coordination without full deployment.

Full-scale exercises replicate the conditions of real events, involving multiple agencies to test interoperability. This scaffolding approach, emphasized by Public Safety Canada and reinforced in national training frameworks, builds the muscle memory required for rare but high-consequence disasters.

Canadian mandates support these efforts. The federal Emergency Management Strategy calls for integrated MFM plans. Provinces such as Alberta have developed operational guidance through their Mass Fatality Plan, while municipalities



implement surge protocols aligned with provincial frameworks. These complement national health guidance, such as the Health Portfolio Emergency Response Plan for pandemics.

Yet challenges persist. Training is too often treated as a compliance exercise, with emphasis on completion rather than depth. Resource limitations in funding, personnel and specialized equipment make it difficult to sustain programs for events that are infrequent but devastating.

Emerging risks, including cyber attacks on identification systems and climate-driven disasters, add further complexity.

Assessing competency outside of real incidents is also difficult. Evaluations rely heavily on exercise results or after-action reports. Canadian assessments point to variability across jurisdictions. Reports from Public Safety Canada and the Office of the Auditor General have noted gaps in capacity, including inconsistent mutual aid agreements and uneven access to disaster victim identification expertise. These findings highlight the ongoing challenge of ensuring consistent readiness nationwide.

### Artificial Intelligence Highlights Weaknesses

Innovation provides new opportunities. Virtual reality can simulate chaotic environments for safe training, enhancing empathy and decision making. Artificial intelligence personalizes scenarios and highlights weaknesses using predictive analytics. Online and blended training, supported by learning management systems, increases accessibility and ensures progress can be tracked. Community inclusive approaches bring local stakeholders into planning and training, improving cultural relevance.

Tools such as Solusyon's Checklyst system illustrate these advances. Combining electronic applications with durable field copies, it guides DVI responders through decision trees based on recognized best practices. Designed to support responders with minimal training, it strengthens competency even in complex situations.

In conclusion, competency is the foundation of effective mass-fatality management and disaster-victim identification. Training and exercises build the pathway, frameworks and standards ensure consistency, and innovation sustains credibility. As threats evolve, Canada's investment in these areas safeguards not only operational readiness but also the human dignity at the heart of every response. 🍁

# ONTARIO DEMCON

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# The Critical Role of the Private Sector

## Business's Inclusion in Disaster Management Saves Lives

By Adam McAllister, National Chair, UN ARISE Canada Network

**A**s natural disasters, pandemics and humanitarian crises grow in scale and complexity, disaster response has become a multidisciplinary effort. Governments and militaries remain the primary responders in large-scale emergencies, but they increasingly depend on partnerships with the private sector to enhance response capabilities.

The business community - ranging from multinational corporations to local enterprises - possesses unique assets, infrastructure and expertise that can complement civil-military efforts and significantly improve outcomes during disaster response and recovery.

### The Increasing Complexity of Disaster Response

Modern disasters are rarely contained events. From earthquakes and hurricanes to cyberattacks and global pandemics, the ripple effects often transcend national and sub-national borders, straining the capacity of government and military responders.

Civil-military operations - cooperative efforts between civilian authorities and military forces - are essential in such circumstances as they combine command structures, logistical efficiency and emergency response capabilities.



However, even this combined capacity can be insufficient without private-sector involvement.

Further, without the business community engaged, the threshold for using military assets in disaster response can be significantly increased.

Businesses bring to the table assets that governments and militaries may lack such as agile logistics, cutting-edge technologies and global supply chains.

Recognizing this, both civil and military authorities benefit from increasing formal partnerships with businesses to strengthen disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

### **Key Contributions of Business in Disaster Response**

#### ***Logistics and Supply Chain Management***

One of the most valuable assets that businesses contribute to disaster response is logistical capability.

Major logistics and transportation companies such as FedEx, UPS, DHL and Maersk possess sophisticated networks and real-time tracking systems that are critical in transporting goods rapidly and efficiently.

During natural disasters or humanitarian crises, these firms often mobilize fleets of trucks, ships and aircraft to deliver emergency supplies, medical equipment and food to affected areas.

In civil-military contexts, where military forces might secure routes or provide transport planes, private logistics firms, especially those operating at local scale, can coordinate the last-mile delivery, ensuring aid reaches the intended recipients.

The speed, scale and adaptability of commercial logistics can be a game-changer in high-pressure, resource-limited situations.

#### ***Technology and Communications***

Disasters often cripple communication infrastructure, making coordination between agencies and affected populations extremely difficult. Telecommunications companies play a vital role in restoring communication networks.

For example, companies like Bell, Rogers and Telus may have deployable portable cell towers to quickly and temporarily reestablish connectivity in disaster zones.

Tech firms contribute in other critical ways. Google's Crisis Map, Facebook's Safety Check and Microsoft's cloud platforms have been used during disasters to share real-time data, track population movement and support inter-agency coordination.

These digital tools empower civil-military responders with situational awareness, allowing for better decision making and faster interventions.

#### ***Infrastructure and Engineering Capabilities***

Engineering and construction firms can rapidly restore or build

critical infrastructure such as temporary housing, bridges or sanitation systems.

Local construction firms and heavy equipment operators are often involved in response and restoration efforts in the aftermath of earthquakes and floods.

For example, in the wake of flooding in British Columbia's lower mainland, BGC Engineering deployed various technologies to assist in data collection and damage assessment for prioritized action.

In a civil-military setting, businesses may assist in setting up field hospitals, airstrips or shelters alongside military engineers, accelerating the stabilization of disaster-struck areas.

#### ***Manufacturing and Resource Provisioning***

In times of crisis, rapid manufacturing and retooling can be vital.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, numerous companies, including automobile and textile manufacturers, converted their production lines to produce ventilators, masks and personal protective equipment (PPE).

Pharmaceutical companies raced to develop and distribute vaccines.

The ability of businesses to scale up production, repurpose facilities and mobilize supply chains adds depth and flexibility to civil-military responses. It also frees up military and government resources to focus on security, logistics and command.





## Mechanisms for Collaboration

### Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

Public-private partnerships are formal arrangements that establish roles and responsibilities before disasters occur. These partnerships create trust, streamline communication and allow for faster mobilization when emergencies arise.

Whereas PPPs are best known for infrastructure development, this mechanism can be readily employed across all orders of government, from neighbourhoods to nations, to reduce disaster risk.

For example, the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) maintains a National Business Emergency Operations Center (NBEOC), where private sector partners share information and coordinate disaster response efforts.

In Canada, businesses such as Emergency Management Logistics (<https://emlcanada.ca>) are enabling faster, more reliable, transparent procurement so that public and private sectors can work better together.

### Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA)

In countries where appropriate legislative frameworks already exist, businesses frequently engage with the military as those laws allow for military resources to be used in support of civilian needs during natural disasters, pandemics and other crises.

Businesses can contribute to those actions by providing equipment, contractors or technical support to military-led relief efforts.

### Industry Working Groups and Networks

Private sector groups, such as the United Nations ARISE Networks ([arisecanada.org](http://arisecanada.org)), operate business-led disaster resilience initiatives that enable the private sector to better contribute to local, regional and national disaster resilience. These networks facilitate training, share best practices and enable simulation exercises that improve readiness and coordination.



Adam McAllister,  
National Chair,  
UN ARISE Canada Network

### Corporate Social Responsibility and Preparedness

Businesses have increasingly embedded disaster resilience and response within their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) frameworks. Beyond philanthropic donations, companies now engage in long-term capacity-building efforts, such as:

- Training employees in emergency response, both in corporate environments and at home;
- Participating in community disaster-preparedness drills;
- Responsible stockpiling of emergency supplies;
- Funding research into climate resilience and disaster mitigation.

This proactive stance not only benefits the broader community but also enhances business continuity, protecting supply chains, assets and employees from future shocks.

### Innovation and Agility

Businesses, especially startups and innovators, have the capacity to rapidly develop and deploy new technologies tailored to disaster environments. For instance:

- Drones have been used to survey damage, deliver medicine and map disaster zones;
- Portable water purification systems and solar-powered lights have been designed for use in refugee camps;



- AI and machine-learning tools can now predict disaster impacts and model recovery scenarios.

Such innovations, when shared with civil and military partners, can dramatically improve the effectiveness of response efforts.

### Challenges and Considerations

Despite the benefits, integrating business into civil-military disaster response comes with challenges:

- **Coordination Complexity:** Multiple actors with different goals and cultures can lead to confusion or redundancy;
- **Data Privacy and Security:** Sharing information between businesses, governments and militaries must be done carefully to protect sensitive data;
- **Profit Motives versus Public Good:** The involvement of for-profit entities must be managed transparently to avoid conflicts of interest or exploitative practices;
- **Legal and Regulatory Barriers:** Licensing, liability and procurement regulations can delay or limit private-sector involvement in some contexts.

To overcome these challenges, clear frameworks, training and mutual trust must be developed well before a crisis occurs.

### Conclusion

In an era marked by complex large-scale disasters, the role of business in supporting civil-military disaster response is not just beneficial - it is essential. Companies bring speed, innovation, logistical muscle and technological prowess that can significantly boost the effectiveness of traditional responders.

Whether through formal public-private partnerships or spontaneous community-driven initiatives, businesses can be powerful allies in saving lives, stabilizing regions and rebuilding communities.

As disaster risks continue to rise due to climate change, geopolitical

tensions and global interconnect- edness, deepening collaboration between business, military and civil actors is not a luxury - it's a necessity.

Investing in these partnerships today will determine how well society can withstand and recover from the crises of tomorrow. 🍁

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# Behind the Scenes

## Training and Competency Development Key in Emergency Management

By Sam Roberts, President, IAEM Canada

**W**hen Canadians think about disaster response, images of first responders, sandbags along swollen rivers or wildfire crews battling flames often come to mind. Behind the scenes, however, lies another critical piece of the puzzle: training and competency development. These are the foundations that allow individuals, organizations and communities to respond effectively to crises that can range from ice storms to industrial accidents.

Competency development is not just about acquiring knowledge. It is about being able to apply that knowledge under pressure, in coordination with others and in circumstances that are often stressful and unpredictable. For Canadians, whether emergency managers, local officials or members of

the public with an interest in preparedness, understanding the link between training, competency and resilience is key to building safer communities.

### Why Competency Matters

Canada faces an evolving landscape of emergencies. Climate change has intensified weather-related disasters such as floods and wildfires while risks of pandemics, cyberattacks and industrial incidents remain ever-present. According to Public Safety Canada's National Risk Profile (2023), large-scale events are not only becoming



Sam Roberts  
President,  
IAEM  
Canada

more frequent but also more complex.

Competency in this context refers to more than formal qualifications. It encompasses a blend of skills, judgment, technical knowledge and the ability to act effectively in real-world situations.

For example, an emergency operations centre staff member may understand procedures on paper, but true competency is demonstrated when they can make time-sensitive decisions, collaborate with diverse partners and communicate clearly to the public during an unfolding disaster.



## Training as the Pathway to Competency

Training is the structured process that builds toward competency. It can take many forms:

- Classroom instruction, such as courses offered through Public Safety Canada's Canadian Emergency Management College;
- Tabletop exercises where participants walk through hypothetical scenarios and explore decision-making processes;
- Functional exercises that test specific capabilities, such as coordinating evacuations or activating a reception centre;
- Full-scale exercises where multiple agencies come together to simulate an actual emergency response.

At the community level, training can be as straightforward as conducting a fire drill at a school or practising shelter in place procedures at a local factory. At the organizational level, it may involve testing a municipality's flood response plan or an airport's emergency operations procedures.

The Incident Command System (ICS), recognized by all provinces and territories in Canada, provides a common language and structure that supports these exercises. ICS training allows firefighters, police, health officials and volunteers to work within the same framework during emergencies.

### The Role of Government in Supporting Training

Emergency management is a shared responsibility in Canada. Federal, provincial, territorial, Indigenous and municipal governments all play a role in developing and supporting training opportunities.



**Training and competency development are not abstract concepts reserved for specialists.**

Sam Roberts, President, IAEM Canada

- **Federal Government:** Public Safety Canada provides national guidance through frameworks such as the Emergency Management Strategy for Canada (2019 to 2030) and funds initiatives like the National Disaster Mitigation Program. Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency contribute specialized training in health-related emergencies.
- **Provinces and Territories:** Each province and territory has its own emergency management organization responsible for training programs. British Columbia's Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness provides extensive online and in-person training for municipal officials and Indigenous communities.
- **Municipalities:** Local governments conduct regular drills and exercises to validate their emergency plans. Cities such as Calgary and Ottawa integrate community groups and critical infrastructure partners into their training cycles.

Governments also collaborate with non-governmental organizations, such as the Canadian Red Cross, which provides disaster management training for volunteers, and IAEM Canada, which promotes professional development and certification for emergency managers.

### From Training to Real World Competency

Training is necessary, but competency must be validated through practice and performance.



Consider the 2016 Fort McMurray wildfire in Alberta. Training in evacuation planning, coordination and public alerting gave local authorities the foundation to move more than 80,000 residents to safety. Yet the true measure of competency was seen in the way responders adapted, collaborated and managed cascading challenges in real time.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, training in public health emergency management also proved essential. Competency was demonstrated through the ability to adjust strategies, manage supply chains and maintain trust in public communication under immense pressure.

Competency extends to the community level. Programs such as the Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Programs (NEPP) in British Columbia empower residents to understand risks, practise response actions and support each other during disasters. When citizens are trained and confident, the entire community becomes more resilient.

### Emerging Trends in Training and Competency

Emergency management training in Canada continues to evolve in response to new risks and technologies.

- **Virtual and Hybrid Training:** The pandemic accelerated the use of virtual tabletop exercises and online simulations. These platforms allow participants across the country to connect and collaborate without the need for travel.
- **Integration of Indigenous Knowledge:** Training programs increasingly recognize the importance of Indigenous knowledge systems and traditional practices in building resilience. Collaborative exercises with



Indigenous communities are becoming more common.

- **Focus on Inclusive Practices:** Training now emphasizes accessibility and equity, ensuring that diverse populations, including seniors, people with disabilities and newcomers are considered in emergency planning and response exercises.
- **Competency Frameworks:** The adoption of structured frameworks, such as the Core Competency Framework for Emergency Management Professionals being developed by IAEM Canada, helps organizations set measurable standards for performance. These frameworks align training with the skills and behaviours required in the field.
- **Climate Adaptation:** With climate change driving more extreme events, training increasingly includes scenarios related to wildfire urban interface fires, heat waves and flooding in coastal and northern communities.

### What Canadians Can Take Away

Even for those outside the emergency management profession, the lessons of training and competency development are relevant. Whether in a workplace, a school or a neighbourhood, the principles are the same:

- Practice builds confidence;
- Coordination ensures efficiency;
- Compassion and flexibility matter as much as technical skills.

Canadians can support these efforts by participating in local preparedness programs, volunteering with organizations such as the Red Cross or St. John Ambulance or simply taking the time to understand their community's emergency plan. In doing so, they become part of a broader culture of readiness.

Training and competency development are not abstract concepts reserved for specialists. They are the building blocks of resilience that affect every Canadian. The ability to act effectively under pressure, coordinate across organizations and support one another during crises is what turns plans into successful outcomes.

As Canada continues to face diverse and complex risks, investing in training at all levels, from individuals to governments, ensures that we are not only prepared but also capable. Emergency management, at its heart, is about people helping people.

By fostering competency through ongoing training and compassionate practice, Canadians strengthen their communities and safeguard their future. 🍁



# Stronger Together

## Indigenous-Led Collaboration Driving Emergency Management in Atlantic Canada

By Atlantic Emergency Management Conference stakeholders

Photo Credit: Nelson Cloud

**W**hen the North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council (NSMTC), Wolastoqey Tribal Council Inc. (WTCI) and the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) partnered to host the Atlantic Emergency Management Conference (AEMC), they weren't just putting on another professional event. They were showcasing the strength of collaboration, the value of Indigenous leadership and a vision for resilience that is deeply rooted in community.

The 2025 AEMC, held in Charlottetown from Sept. 2-4, reflected this commitment. With the theme "Braving the Uncertain," the conference was designed to carve out a unique space in Canada's emergency management landscape. It's more than a meeting - it's a living expression of Indigenous approaches to resilience, collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

"We strive to provide a welcoming space where people can learn from one another, share best practices and build capability through professional development," said CJ Tarling, Emergency Management Program Manager, North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council. "The conference has a flexible feel - less rigid than others - and it ensures First Nations communities in the region have a platform designed with their needs in mind."

### A Conference with a Distinct Purpose

Unlike larger, more formal gatherings, the Atlantic Emergency Management Conference reflects a



grassroots approach. It is intentionally inclusive, ensuring voices from every community have the chance to be heard. Indigenous prayer, culture and teachings are seamlessly woven into the programming, ensuring that Elders, youth and leaders alike can contribute their perspectives.

"The conference is about braving the uncertain," Tarling explained. "This industry is always changing and we're constantly facing new challenges. AEMC brings people together across a wide breadth of topics so we can navigate that uncertainty together."

The conference is also a chance to break down silos. Participants gain not only technical knowledge but also cultural insight, building connections that extend beyond the event.



"What we hope people take away are new relationships and new understanding," Tarling said. "It's not just about challenges faced by First Nations in the Atlantic, but across the country. By sharing perspectives, we highlight the individuality of each sovereign nation."

### Collaboration That Extends Beyond the Conference

While AEMC is the flagship gathering, the partnership between NSMTC, WTCI and CMM extends year-round. Together, they have delivered joint training opportunities, facilitated workshops and opened doors for recruitment in the emergency management sector.

Scott MacDonnell, CMM emergency management program manager, shared one of the most significant achievements: the creation of a specialized certificate program in partnership with Nova Scotia Community College.

"The Atlantic First Nations Emergency Management Training Program is a six-month certificate designed specifically for First Nations EM professionals," MacDonnell explained. "It's practical and community-focused - students can build on the plans and initiatives they already have underway and leave the program better able to implement new strategies and practices."

Now in its fourth cohort, the program has strengthened community capacity in ways that go beyond classroom learning. It's a testament to the importance of training rooted in local realities.

"Where once responses were more reactive, we now see communities being proactive - creating and sharing emergency plans, evacuation strategies and working collaboratively through a region-wide network of community Emergency Management," MacDonnell said.



Left front: Pam Ryan, Jodi MacIntosh, Kristina Malaluan; Left back: Craig Wakelin, CJ Tarling, Vanessa McLaughlin(NSMTC)



Beverly Wilkins (ESI) and Scott Cameron (EML)

### The Power of Inter-Nation Collaboration

Collaboration between Nations has proven to be more than symbolic - it's practical, effective and life-saving. The 2023 New Brunswick wildfires are a recent example. Because of strong relationships and established communication systems, information and resources were shared quickly.

"In those fires, we saw how relationships mattered," Tarling recalled. "Knowledge could be dispersed faster, messages went directly to communities and response times were shorter. That kind of speed comes from trust and collaboration."

Working together also means sharing strengths. "Stronger together" has become more than a phrase - it's a way of operating.



CJ Tarling and Craig Wakelin (NSMTC)



Jim Iemming (ESI) and Pascal Rodier (ND Health)

"Where one community may lack resources, others may have an abundance," Tarling explained. "That balance is only possible when communities are willing to reach out, trust one another and share what they have."

### Sharing Lessons Learned

The collaborative model being built in Atlantic Canada offers lessons for the rest of the country. Relationships - both among nations and with external partners - are at the heart of it.

"Don't let a poor experience with an external partner stop you from building new relationships," said MacDonnell. "And don't give up on repairing broken ones. We've learned that by working together, we can reimagine those relationships in ways that honour the individuality of each Nation while still finding common ground."



That approach is as relevant to provincial governments and municipalities as it is to First Nations. By focusing on collaboration rather than division, Atlantic Nations are modeling what a stronger, more resilient emergency management sector can look like.

### Measuring Success Beyond Numbers

Success isn't always easy to quantify, but in this case it's visible in the growing strength of communities.

"We don't compare one community to another," Tarling said. "Everyone moves at their own pace. But what we do see is more trained professionals, more interest and more capacity in communities. That's how we know our response is becoming more robust."

The human element is just as important. Emergency management, after all, is about people.

"Sometimes we focus too much on the tasks and not enough on the people," Tarling reflected. "But without the people, there are no communities. Indigenous-led collaboration offers a more holistic approach that emphasizes pre-care and after-care, not just the emergency itself."

### Looking Ahead

The long-term vision is seamless interoperability among Atlantic First Nations - where communities can rely on each other in times of need. The goal is that if a community must evacuate, its members can relocate to another First Nation rather than a hotel in a nearby city.

"That's a fundamental difference," said Tarling. "In another First Nation, people would still have access to culture, wraparound supports and healing. That's something a hotel room just can't provide."



Stephen Saddler (Arcurri Group)



Scott MacDonnell (CMM)



Mark Gillan (ESI) and CJ Tarling (NSMTC)

**This industry is always changing and we're constantly facing new challenges.**

**CJ Tarling, Emergency Management Program Manager,  
North Shore Mi'kmaq Tribal Council**

The hope is that this Indigenous-led collaboration will continue to shape the future of emergency management across Canada.

"It offers a more holistic, people-first approach," MacDonnell concluded. "It's about building resilience that goes beyond infrastructure - it's about ensuring communities themselves are strong, connected and prepared."

### Celebrating the Bigger Picture

The Atlantic Emergency Management Conference is an important

milestone each year, but the true story lies in the work happening between conferences. The collaboration between NSMTC, WTCI and CMM is more than organizational - it's cultural, relational and deeply impactful.

It's a reminder that resilience is not built in isolation. It comes from trust, shared learning and the willingness to grow together. And as Indigenous Nations in Atlantic Canada continue to demonstrate, collaboration is not just a strategy - it's a way of life. 🍁





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# Stories of Resilience - Voices From Jasper

## Community Resilience in the Wake of Wildfire

By Brooklyn Rushton, Strategic Adaptation Fellow, The Resilience Institute

**R**esilience after disaster is rooted not only in rebuilt homes and infrastructure, but in people. By creating space for community voices and supporting their capacity to heal and adapt, recovery becomes more than a return to normal; it becomes a step toward stronger, more resilient communities in the face of a changing climate.

This truth came into sharp focus in July 2024, when wildfire swept through Jasper, Alta., reshaping not only the landscape but also the lives of everyone who calls this mountain town home. Homes and livelihoods were lost. Entire neighbourhoods were uprooted. Yet amid loss, something powerful emerged: the need for a shared expression of healing, reflection and renewal.

Out of this moment came Voices from Jasper, part of the Stories of Resilience thematic engagement program by The Resilience Institute, which we had the opportunity to deliver as part of our Roots for Resilience partnership with the Canadian Red Cross.

### A Community-Centred Journey

Starting in February 2025, several Jasper residents came together in a series of learning workshops to reflect on what resilience means for themselves, their community and the land amidst a changing climate. Through storytelling, creative practice and dialogue, they revisited their experience of the wildfire and its aftermath, capturing their personal journeys through written stories, visual art and photography.

Together, the group walked through fire-scorched forests, painted and photographed the transformed landscape and wrote deeply personal accounts of recovery. For some, the process was a way to grieve; for others, it was a step toward imagining new futures and ways forward after such devastation.

Throughout the program, resilience became a creative journey, as expressed by participant Katie Potter:



"On these fire-ravaged canvases I painted fireweed... These paintings symbolized that there is beauty in resilience, that even a burnt crisp canvas could be brought back to life and be beautiful again."

## The Power of Storytelling

The group's creations culminated in a community exhibition, *Stories of Resilience – Voices from Jasper*, held at the Jasper Art Gallery from July 25 to Aug. 16, 2025. The opening reception, marking one year since the wildfire, brought neighbours together to share stories, view the artwork and photographs and reflect collectively on recovery.

Throughout the exhibition, the experience carried different but equally powerful meanings. For many Jasper residents, the stories provided validation as they could see their own experiences reflected and find meaning in the shared experience.

For visitors, the exhibition opened a window into what it meant to live through a wildfire. In doing so, it invited everyone who visited to connect Jasper's story to the broader realities of a changing climate, recognizing that what happened here is part of a much larger pattern affecting communities across the globe.

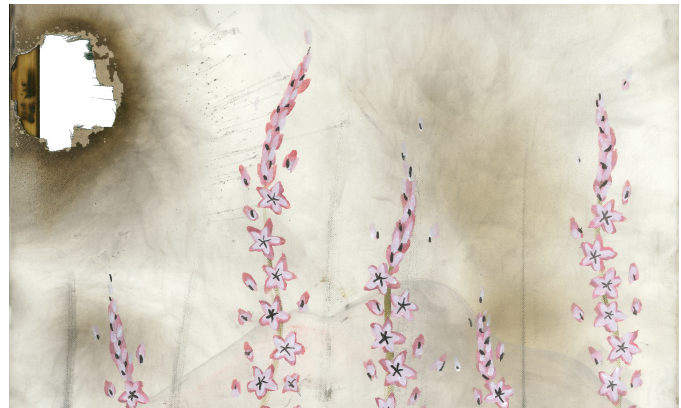
## Lessons for Emergency Management

For communities everywhere facing climate disasters, the *Stories of Resilience - Voices from Jasper* program offers vital lessons. Beyond technical preparedness and logistical response, resilience after disaster is lived through human relationships, culture and imagination.

1. **Resilience is relational.** Community resilience cannot be measured solely in rebuilt roads, homes or infrastructure. It also resides in the bonds between people and place and the sense of belonging that allows communities to recover and adapt together.
2. **Storytelling aids recovery.** Disasters can leave individuals isolated in their grief or overwhelmed by complexity. Sharing stories provides a way to process trauma, validate personal experience and build shared meaning.
3. **Local voices matter.** Every community carries unique knowledge of its vulnerabilities and strengths - perspectives that may not always be visible to outside agencies. In Jasper, residents highlighted not only where the wildfire's impacts were most deeply felt, but also where resilience within the community was strongest.
4. **Creativity builds agency.** Through art, writing and photography, residents transformed their



Stories of Resilience – Voices From Jasper exhibition at the Jasper Art Gallery



Stories of Resilience – Voices From Jasper exhibition at the Jasper Art Gallery; The Resilience of Fireweed by Katie Potter

experience from one of loss to active meaning-making. Creative practice helped participants become agents of recovery, reminding us that resilience-building requires fostering spaces for expression and self-determination.

As climate risks and impacts escalate, communities need more than hazard maps and response protocols. They need spaces to reflect, connect and reimagine. The Jasper wildfire tested the strength of a mountain town, but *Voices from Jasper* revealed that resilience is found in the stories people tell, the art they create and the ways they come together to make meaning of loss. 🍁

Learn more at [resilienceinstitute.ca](https://resilienceinstitute.ca).

Read the stories here:





# Upcoming Emergency Conferences

## A Quick Primer On the Next Few Months

### OCTOBER 2025

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>21-22</b><br>Toronto              | <b>Ontario DEMCON (Disaster and Emergency Management Conference): Building on Relationships Towards Safer Communities and a Prepared Ontario</b><br><a href="http://www.crtdemcon.ca/DEMCON//">www.crtdemcon.ca/DEMCON//</a> |
| <b>28-30</b><br>Kananaskis,<br>Alta. | <b>2025 Disaster Forum - Building Connections in Emergency Management &amp; Business Continuity</b><br><a href="http://www.disasterforum.ca/">www.disasterforum.ca/</a>  |

### NOVEMBER 2025

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>2-6</b><br>Moose Jaw/<br>Waskesui | <b>2025 Saskatchewan Emergency Planners Association Conference</b><br><a href="http://www.sepa.ca/2025-conference.html">www.sepa.ca/2025-conference.html</a>  |
| <b>7-8</b><br>Vancouver              | <b>The International Conference on Disasters Management Method and Geomatics Solutions</b><br><a href="http://www.researchfora.net/event/index.php?id=3255118">www.researchfora.net/event/index.php?id=3255118</a>      |
| <b>14-15</b><br>Calgary              | <b>The International Conference on Natural Disaster Management</b><br><a href="http://www.wrfconference.com/event/index.php?id=3121290">www.wrfconference.com/event/index.php?id=3121290</a>                            |
| <b>18-19</b><br>Toronto              | <b>The International Conference on Disasters Management, Geomatics Solutions and Planning</b><br><a href="http://www.wrfconference.com/event/index.php?id=3121293">www.wrfconference.com/event/index.php?id=3121293</a> |
| <b>28-29</b><br>Montreal             | <b>The International Conference on Civil Engineering, Architecture and Disaster Management</b><br><a href="http://www.igaeglobal.com/conf/index.php?id=3248393">www.igaeglobal.com/conf/index.php?id=3248393</a>        |

### DECEMBER 2025

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|--------------------------|--|
| <b>5-6</b><br>Calgary    | <b>The International Conference on Geomatics, Disasters Management and Methods</b><br><a href="http://www.wrfconference.com/event/index.php?id=3307955">www.wrfconference.com/event/index.php?id=3307955</a>         |
| <b>10-11</b><br>Winnipeg | <b>The International Conference on Forest Fire Disaster Management conference</b><br><a href="http://www.researchfora.net/event/index.php?id=3279067">www.researchfora.net/event/index.php?id=3279067</a>            |
| <b>10-11</b><br>Markham  | <b>The International Conference on Geomatics, Disasters Management and Methods</b><br><a href="http://www.researchplus.co/event/index.php?id=3313195">www.researchplus.co/event/index.php?id=3313195</a>             |
| <b>12-13</b><br>Toronto  | <b>The International Conference on Disaster Nursing, Disaster Management and Stabilization</b><br><a href="http://www.issersociety.com/conf/index.php?id=3319909">www.issersociety.com/conf/index.php?id=3319909</a> |

### JANUARY 2026

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>28-30</b><br>Winnipeg | <b>Manitoba Disaster Management Conference</b><br><a href="http://www.manitobadmc.com/">www.manitobadmc.com/</a> |
|--------------------------|--|

### FEBRUARY 2026

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>11 - 12</b><br>Kelowna, B.C. | <b>The Disaster Response and Emergency Management Symposium</b><br><a href="http://www.canadianinstitute.com/disaster-response-emergency-management-symposium/">www.canadianinstitute.com/disaster-response-emergency-management-symposium/</a> |
|---------------------------------|---|

### JUNE 2026

- |                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| <b>4-5</b><br>Toronto | <b>The Emergency Preparedness in Healthcare Conference</b><br><a href="http://www.sparkconferences.com/emergency-preparedness-toronto/">www.sparkconferences.com/emergency-preparedness-toronto/</a> |
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# IAEM Canada

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