

DISASTERS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

GENERAL

1. As an organization devoted to emergency and primary patient care, the St. John Ambulance Brigade must be prepared to take an active role in the relief of suffering during a disaster or major emergency.
2. Despite all of the planning, training, education and foresight by the leadership within a community, emergencies will occur. Variables that are not absolutely predictable are:
 - a. the type of emergency
 - fire
 - earthquake
 - flood
 - transportation (road, rail, air, marine)
 - b. the magnitude of the emergency
 - number of casualties
 - types of injuries
 - number of citizens displaced
 - continuing or expanding hazards
 - c. the location of the emergency
 - size of geographical area affected
 - accessibility to site of emergency
 - evacuation areas

RESPONSIBILITY

3. The St. John Ambulance Brigade has a responsibility to provide trained volunteers who can respond to emergency situations in an organized, pre-planned manner. This responsibility must be known not only throughout St. John Ambulance, but all other organizations, both governmental and non-governmental that participate in lifesaving, relief and disaster assistance.
4. For effective disaster control work there must be a central headquarters which coordinates all activity. The Brigade must also recognize this headquarters, which is usually a government department or agency. In other words, the St. John Ambulance Brigade must consider that it is one of the disaster services, prepared to subordinate itself to control by such a headquarters, *although retaining its independence in arranging and handling the technical part of the operations for which it has been assigned responsibility.*

5. During an emergency or disaster, Brigade Officers are directly responsible for operational response issues. This includes the personal welfare of the Brigade members involved.
6. During an emergency or disaster, Provincial/Territorial Councils and/or Branches are responsible to ensure the Brigade has the resources (human, physical and financial) necessary to carry out its mandate.

PLANNING

7. In order to get maximum effectiveness, it is necessary for the Brigade to fit thoroughly into general disaster plans and operations as part of a team, and to begin this process early in the community's planning cycle. It is also necessary that active participation occurs at all levels with other organizations in the planning stages, as well as during operations. All agencies will then be fully acquainted with the contribution the Brigade is prepared to make and will see where that contribution belongs in the overall relief effort. This concept is essential for the prevention of duplication and wasted effort.
8. It is critical that Brigade Officers, Provincial/Territorial Councils, and/or Branches are equal partners in any disaster or emergency plan and that all levels of the St. John Ambulance organization have current plans in place.

REFERENCE

9. For details of a response by St. John Ambulance to an emergency or disaster, consult:

Disaster and Emergency
Preparedness Planning Guide

St. John Ambulance Brigade
Priory of Canada