



What is an "EMO"?



EMO is an acronym for **Emergency Management Organization**. An EMO provides the framework for a community to deal with significant emergency events that have the potential to exceed the normal capacity of one single entity to respond. Put simply, an EMO coordinates actions from a variety of sources to ensure that the response to an emergency event meets the key objectives of:

- saving lives and reducing suffering;
- protecting the environment and property;
- maintaining public confidence;
- reducing economic and social losses; and,
- supporting timely and comprehensive recovery.

Like other jurisdictions, Saskatchewan is increasingly challenged by the possibility of both natural and human-induced emergency events that can have a considerable impact on people, property, critical infrastructure, the environment and the economy. Natural disasters such as weather events and fires, and human-induced disasters like terrorism and hazardous materials spills, pose ongoing threats to our overall well-being. The possibility of these threats occurring serves as a constant reminder of the need for emergency preparedness.

Saskatchewan's *Emergency Planning Act* describes the responsibility of the local government authority to direct and control emergency planning and responses within its jurisdictional boundaries. The Act directs municipalities to establish an EMO including, appointing an emergency measures coordinator and instituting a local planning committee. The planning committee is subsequently charged with overseeing a municipal emergency plan, to identify which necessary services are available during an emergency (including those that may be obtained through mutual aid agreements or similar arrangements with other agencies) and to outline how and when those services and resources will be activated and deployed to respond to an emergency.

In August 2023, the Town of Lumsden and the RM of Lumsden No. 189 partnered to formally establish a combined Lumsden and District Emergency Management Organization. To guide the activities of the combined EMO, Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator positions were created and staffed. There are many benefits to be derived from this partnership but probably none more critical than the efficient use of available resources. Particularly since both the Town and the RM rely upon common emergency responders like the RCMP, Lumsden & District Fire Department and local medical first responders, it is important that efforts be effectively coordinated to tackle a significant emergency. This is vital if the event has potential impact throughout the area and emergency responders need to be dispatched to more than one location. A shared EMO with common objectives and reporting systems, ensures response actions and procedures are consistent and consistently applied, regardless of which municipality the emergency is occurring within.

Emergencies may vary in scope and intensity from small, localized incidents to multi-jurisdictional disasters impacting people, property, infrastructure and the environment. The operation of the Lumsden and District Emergency Management Organization will not prevent nor reduce the possibility of an emergency occurring. What it can do however, is ensure the delivery of coordinated actions to respond to any emergency event within its purview promptly, effectively and safely.

If you have questions or need more information, contact:

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