

# **Ontario Public Health Standards**

## ***Public Health Emergency Preparedness Standard & Protocol***

**Justine Hartley  
Emergency Management Unit  
Ministry of Health & Long-Term  
Care  
November 24, 2008**



# Overview

- Scope and History
- PHEP Standard: Goal, Purpose, Linkages
- Requirements: What Does it Mean to You?
- Next Steps

# PH Emergency Preparedness Standard & Protocol

## Scope:

- To support the implementation of measures that will prepare the board of health to respond to 'emergencies'
- Focus is on board of health preparedness, not on other components of emergency management (prevention/mitigation, response, recovery)
- Protocol intended to provide details outlining how Boards of Health operationalize specific requirements in the Standard

# History

Aspects of public health emergency preparedness activities have been included in previous iterations of mandatory health programs:

## 1986

- Provided a framework for the development of public health plans to respond to emergencies

## 1989

- Included a specific program area on Emergency Response

## 1997

- Included emergency preparedness requirements in the Health Hazard Investigation Program and the Infectious Diseases Program

# **PHEP Standard: Goal & Societal Outcomes**

## **Goal:**

To enable and ensure a consistent and effective response to public health emergencies and emergencies with public health impacts

## **Societal Outcomes:**

- Effective preparedness infrastructure for public health emergencies
- Increased self-sufficiency of the public and community partners during emergencies

# Purpose

## Consistency.....

- in emergency preparedness and response across Ontario's public health system
- with provincial and municipal emergency preparedness and response programs

## Integration.....

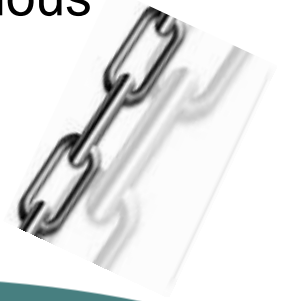
- of emergency preparedness work into existing public health activities
- with provincial and municipal emergency plans, procedures and structures

## Clarity.....

- on the emergency response and communication protocols

# **PHEP Standard: Linkages to other Standards and Protocols**

- 24/7 notification protocol alluded to in numerous Protocols
- Related content with Health Hazard Management Standard (e.g. hazard identification and risk assessment, risk education and awareness, 24/7 notification)
- Related content on response plan component or equivalent (e.g. Rabies, Institutional Outbreak Prevention & Control, Infectious Diseases)

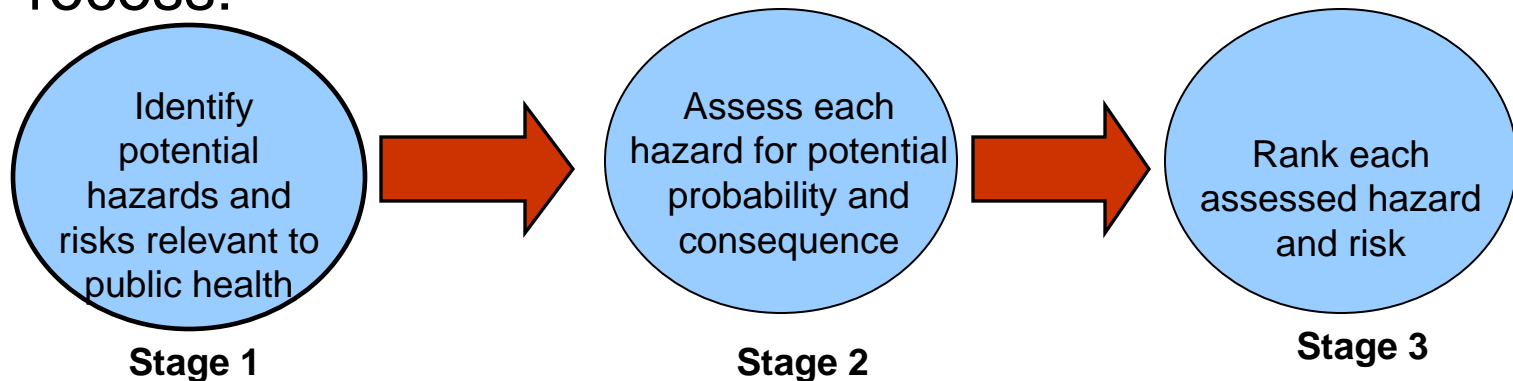


# Requirement 1: Hazards Identification & Risks Assessment (HIRA) for Public Health

*The board of health shall identify and assess the relevant hazards and risks to the public's health in accordance with the Identification, Investigation and Management of Health Hazards Protocol, 2008 (or as current); the Population Health Assessment and Surveillance Protocol, 2008 (or as current); and the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol, 2008 (or as current).*

# Requirement 1: What does this mean to you?

- Reviewing HIRA through a public health lens (for PHUs already involved in the HIRA planning at the municipal level)
- Conducting HIRA to identify and assess the relevant hazards and risks (for PHUs not yet involved in the HIRA planning)
- Process:



## **Requirement 2: Continuity of Operations Plan**

*The board of health shall develop a continuity of operations plan to sustain the ongoing functioning of time-critical board of health services during business disruptions in accordance with the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol, 2008 (or as current).*

## Requirement 2: What does this mean to you?

- Engaging the senior management team
- Creating an inventory of public health programs and services, and determining those that must be delivered continuously (i.e., time critical services)
- Identifying resources/skills required to maintain the time critical services
- Identifying vulnerabilities to the continuation of services
- Developing the recovery procedures for restoration of time critical services

## Requirement 3: Emergency Response Plan

*The board of health shall develop its emergency response plan, in consultation with community partners and governmental bodies, to address the identified hazards for which the board of health and Medical Officer of Health will have a lead role in responding to, consistent with an Incident Management System and in accordance with the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol, 2008 (or as current).*

## Requirement 3: What does this mean to you?

- Developing an all-hazards plan that outlines procedures required to respond to an emergency
- Developing hazard-specific supporting plans
- Including required plan components (i.e. aim, authority, etc.)
- Describing key roles and aligning them with the incident management system (IMS)
- Working with key community partners who have prescribed roles and responsibilities within the plan
- Ensuring plans dovetail with response plans from other government bodies

## Requirement 4: 24/7 Notification Protocol

*The board of health shall develop, implement, and document 24/7 notification protocols for communications with board of health staff, community partners, and governmental bodies to facilitate the sharing of information in accordance with the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol, 2008 (or as current).*

# Requirement 4: What does this mean to you?

- Building on the on-call system Boards of Health currently have in place
- Developing notification capability to:
  - Have two-way communication with board of health staff, key community partners and government bodies
  - Access the medical officer of health during and after business hours
  - Receive, notify, and respond to reports of emergencies, potential health hazards, and reportable diseases
- Supporting the development and maintenance of the notification protocol by including
  - Senior management accountability
  - On-call and stakeholder contact lists
  - Fan out and back-up communication capabilities

## **Requirement 5: Public Awareness Activities**

*The board of health shall, in collaboration with community partners,  
increase public awareness regarding emergency preparedness activities.*

## **Requirement 5: What does this mean to you?**

- Implementing a process for increasing the public's awareness of the emergency preparedness programs in their area
- Including topics that are risk-based and include hazards identified during the HIRA process
- Conducting activities independently or in collaboration with community partners

## Requirement 6: Education Program

*The board of health shall ensure the provision of emergency preparedness and response education and training for board of health*

*staff in accordance with the Public Health Emergency Preparedness*

*Protocol, 2008 (or as current).*

## Requirement 6: What does this mean to you?

- Delivering annual education sessions on components of the PHEP standard including at a minimum:
  - Risks to public health as identified through HIRA
  - Key elements of the continuity of operations plan
  - Key elements of the emergency response plan
  - Roles of key officials and staff in plans
- Recording staff who attended the session

## Requirement 7: Orientation Program

*The board of health shall ensure that its officials are oriented on the board of health's emergency response plan in accordance with the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol, 2008 (or as current).*

## Requirement 7: What does this mean to you?

- Orientating the board of health members and staff on the emergency response plan that shall:
  - Be delivered by the medical officer of health or delegate
  - Be included in the orientation process for new members and staff
  - Include key roles and responsibilities
  - Be completed annually and attendance documented in an appendix to the plan

## Requirement 8: Exercise Program

*The board of health shall exercise, in whole or in part, the continuity of operations plan, emergency response plan, and 24/7 notification procedures in accordance with the Public Health Emergency Preparedness Protocol, 2008 (or as current).*

## Requirement 8: What does this mean for you?

- Conducting annual exercise(s) that test various plans and protocols (e.g., Emergency Response Plan, Notification Protocol)
- Planning and delivery of the exercise(s) to include:
  - Exercise objectives
  - Scenario that includes high-risk hazards
  - Post-exercise debrief(s)
  - Lessons-learned document(s)
- Exercise planning and implementation to include community partners and/or government bodies with prescribed roles in the plan

## Next Steps....

- The OPHS website
- Technical and focused 'nuts and bolts' training