

Emergency Management Branch

2025 Annual Report



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HIGHLIGHTS

The City of St. Albert continued to strengthen its emergency management program by expanding training, improving systems, building strong partnerships, and increasing community and volunteer involvement. Together, these efforts enhance our readiness, support better coordination, and improve our ability to protect people, property, and essential services during emergencies.



National Awards for City of St. Albert's Emergency Management Agency

Public Safety Canada Exemplary Service Award for Resilient Communities for **enhancing disaster response capacity and coordination.**

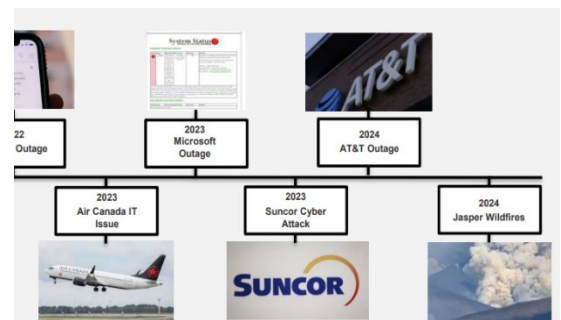
Canadian Association for Municipal Administrators (CAMA) Willis Award for Innovation recognizes programs, projects or services that demonstrate new approaches to leading, facilitating, or administering which result in positive changes to local government processes and practices, and **ultimately bringing outstanding benefits to the organization and the community.**

Internal Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM) Canada Award for our DEM/IC Mark Pickford for **Excellence, Leadership, and Innovation**

Disaster Recovery Institute Canada Award for Preparation & Mitigation recognizes organizations that **exhibit exceptional commitment in proactively reducing, minimizing, or avoiding impacts from business disruptions.** This award serves as **an inspiration for others to prioritize and invest in proactive measures,** fostering a culture of resilience and preparedness across Canada.

Business Continuity Plans

In 2025, the City of St. Albert's completed its corporate Business Continuity Plan (BCP), along with 13 department-specific BCP's. These plans outline the steps the City has taken to reduce impacts of disruptions, clarify roles and responsibilities, support effective decision-making, assist employees during operational challenges, and mitigate risks related to technology and data, people, the environment, assets, reputation, operations, and finances. The plans also identify recovery strategies and help prioritise critical processes and asset management.



Sharing our Expertise, Networking, and Collaborating

The City of St. Albert has five Incident Management Team members who also serve on the province's North Central All Hazards Incident Management Team. These staff take part in advanced regional training and exercises, and they share their much-valued expertise when other municipalities require support. This year, several members assisted Sturgeon County's Emergency Coordination Centre during the Redwater fires.

Our DEM, Mark Pickford, presented on municipal emergency management planning to students in NAIT's Disaster and Emergency Management program, helping future practitioners gain a deeper understanding of the hazards, priorities, and responsibilities municipalities face when managing disruptions.

The City of St. Albert also participated in a panel discussion at the Disaster and Research Institute's national Disaster Forum held in Kananaskis.

The St. Albert Emergency Management program continues its involvement with the Capital Region Emergency Preparedness Partnership and the M10 group, which brings together DEMs from Alberta's ten largest municipalities.

REDUCE RISK
INCREASE RELEVANCE
BUILD TRUST
OPEN DOORS
STRENGTHEN REPUTATION

Strong relationships with regional emergency management partnerships, committees, and professional conferences are critical to the corporation's ability to deliver trusted, relevant, and resilient solutions.

Active engagement in these forums strengthens situational awareness, builds credibility with public safety and infrastructure leaders, and ensures our capabilities align with real-world operational needs.

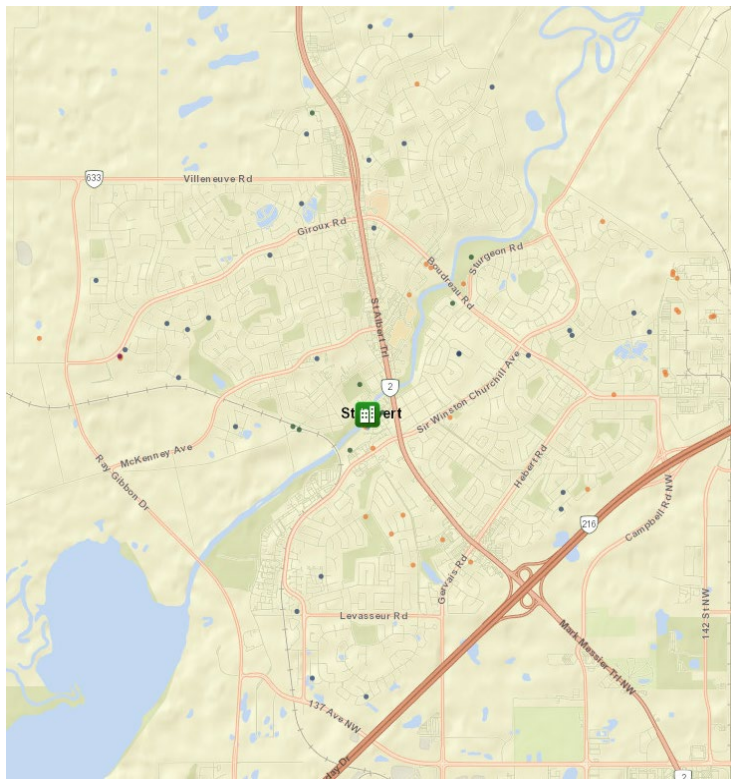
These connections enable early insight into emerging risks and priorities, foster collaboration and interoperability across jurisdictions, and expand opportunities for strategic partnerships.

By contributing to regional planning, shared learning, and sector-wide dialogue, the corporation reinforces its role as a committed partner in resilience, enhances crisis performance, and supports sustainable growth through long-term trust and influence.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Incident Management Team Readiness

The introduction of Incident Management Team (IMT) Participant Forms has formalised member commitments and ensured supervisory approval for both training and deployment. This process strengthens accountability, helps maintain a trained and available response team, and supports consistent operational readiness during incidents.



Enhanced Emergency Notifications

The City implemented the Everbridge 360 mass notification system to support incident activations and hazard communication. IMT members, Emergency Social Services (ESS), volunteers, City staff, and City Council were onboarded, and regular drills are now in place. The system enhances coordination during emergencies and supports Occupational Health and Safety requirements to notify staff and other workplace parties of hazards, including leaseholders in City-owned facilities.

Regional Preparedness and Mutual Support

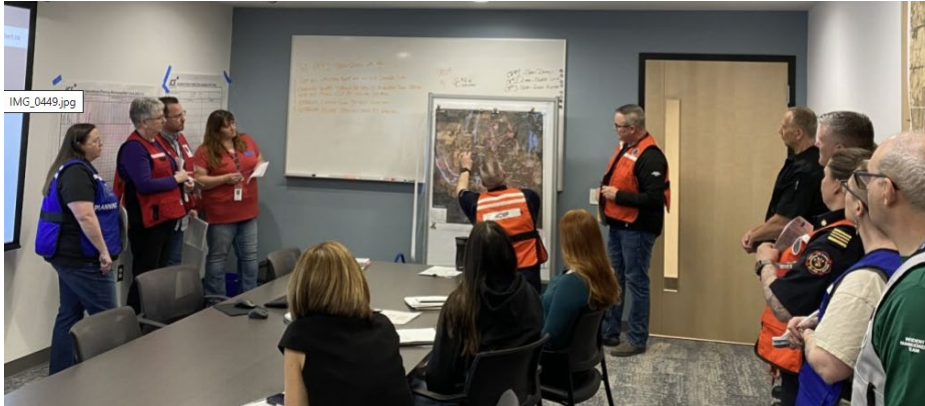
In response to potential wildfire evacuations from Manitoba, the IMT demonstrated strong regional cooperation and preparedness. ESS and Information Officer staff completed planning and readiness activities, strengthening internal capacity and exercising response processes, even though deployment was not ultimately required.

City of St. Albert IMT members were deployed to support the Emergency Coordination Centre during the Redwater Recreation Area wildfires. Emergency Social Services staff

were also prepared to assist at Sturgeon County's emergency reception centre if an evacuation of the Town of Redwater became necessary.

Volunteer and Community Engagement

Volunteers remain integral to emergency management success. Community volunteers supported emergency preparedness efforts, including participation in ESS training and exercises. New community volunteers were trained to deliver Emergency Preparedness Workshops, expanding public outreach. The annual IMT exercise *Supercell 3.0* also



incorporated post-secondary students and community volunteers, strengthening partnerships and future capacity.

Strengthened Partnerships and Resources

A Memorandum of Understanding was established with St. Albert Centre Mall to use the west parking lot as an emergency staging area. This agreement enhances logistical readiness and demonstrates how strong partnerships create reliable resources, clarify expectations, and enable faster, more effective emergency response.

Updated Community Emergency Management Plan

The 2025 Community Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) was approved by City Council and aligns with new provincial legislation. The updated plan strengthens the City's ability to manage local hazards and includes refreshed annexes, such as the Emergency Social Services Annex, which is now aligned with the Provincial ESS Framework.

Improved Incident Coordination

Position-specific email accounts were introduced for IMT roles to improve continuity between operational shifts and strengthen documentation management during activations. This enhancement directly addresses lessons learned from past exercises and supports more coordinated and effective incident response.

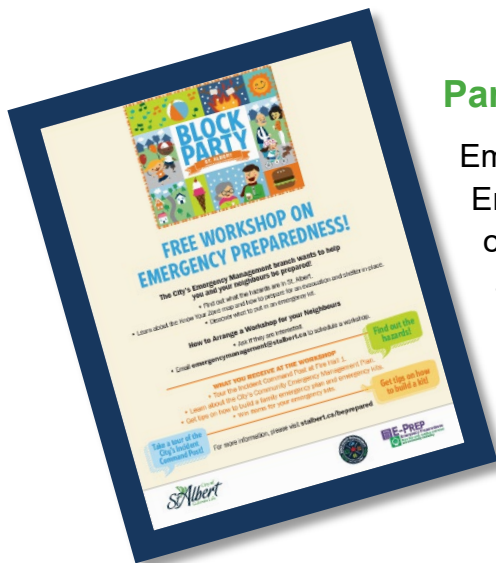
PUBLIC EDUCATION AND PREPAREDNESS

Newcomer Campaign

Newcomers were the priority focus for the City's emergency management public education and preparedness in 2025.

This work included:

- Partnering with the Newcomer Connections Program to present an overview of the City's emergency management plan and personal preparedness.
- Developing a Newcomer Disaster Guidebook, created in collaboration with volunteers from the St. Albert Further Education Newcomer Connections Program, to help new residents navigate emergencies and disasters.
 - Sharing targeted social media content designed specifically to reach and support newcomers.



Partnering with Block Parties

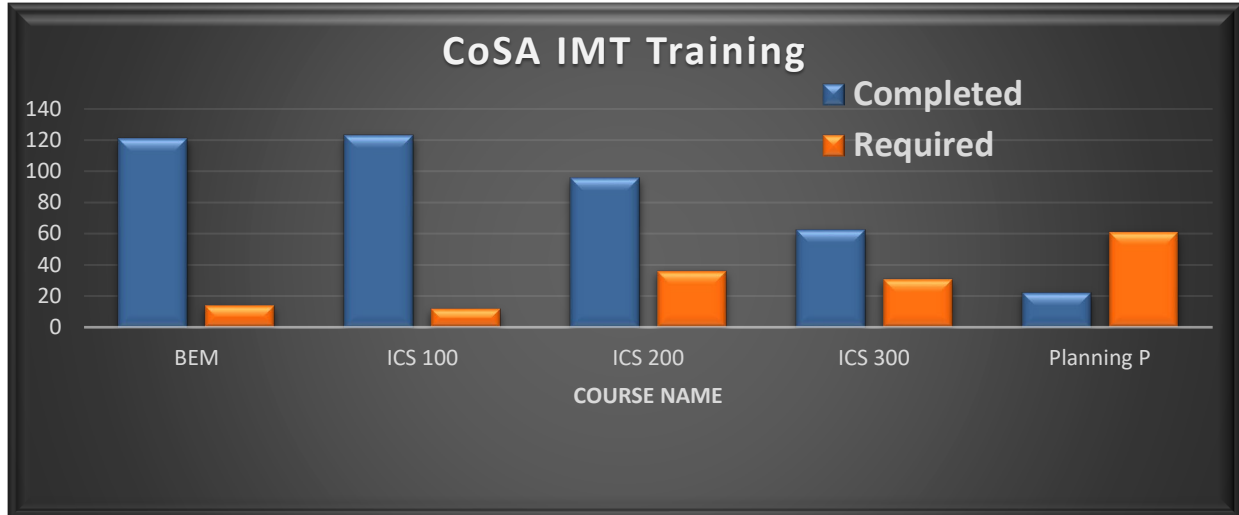
Emergency Management piloted a project to offer Emergency Preparedness Workshops to block party organisers. The initiative did not gain much traction, and the approach will be adjusted for 2026.

TRAINING AND EXERCISES

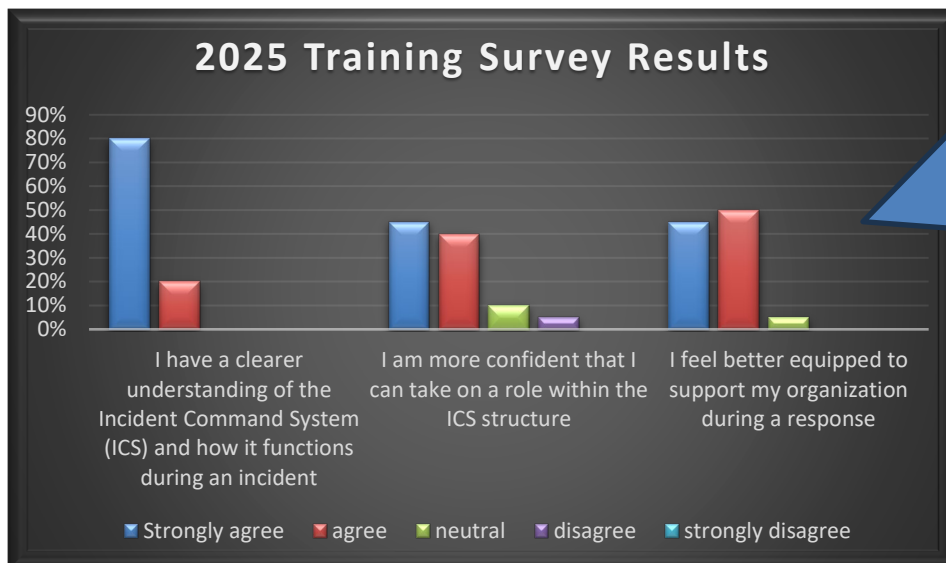
Goal: to have a fully rostered and **trained** Incident Management Team by December 2026.

Emergency Management Training

The City’s EM team hosted and facilitated several emergency management training courses to prepare our staff in incident management:



| | Number of Staff | Number of External/ Partner Participants | Number of Staff Training Hours |
|------|-----------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 2024 | 280 | 259 | 2,597 |
| 2025 | 329 | 271 | 2,249 |



“Group exercises were great. They allowed for collaboration, mistakes, and correction. They also allowed for peer review which was very useful.”

~ICS 200 Student

AFTER ACTION REPORTS – ACTION ITEMS

The Emergency Management Branch conducts after-action reviews following every activation and exercise to support continuous improvement and strengthen the maturity of the City’s Emergency Management Program, the Incident Management Team, and all related protocols and procedures.

Active Shooter/Mass Casualty Exercise, December 2024 AAR

| Action Item | Details | Q4 Status |
|--|---|---|
| Strengthen Interagency Coordination | Convene a follow-up meeting with SAFS, RCMP, MES, AHS EMS, and other key stakeholders to address identified gaps and establish an action plan. Specifically, focus on increasing joint training exercises between SAFS and RCMP to understand respective roles better and improve interagency cooperation during high-pressure scenarios. Such training can refine Unified Command practices and enhance trust among agencies | Ongoing. SAFS working with RCMP and AHS to develop joint communication strategy |
| Enhance Situational Awareness | Invest in training programs for Incident Management Teams (IMTs) to improve situational awareness and information sharing during emergencies. Advocate for the integration of real-time data tools in command posts. | Ongoing |
| Improve Media Coordination | Support joint training exercises for public information officers and emergency responders to ensure consistent and unified messaging during crises. | Ongoing |
| Expand Training for Emergency Tools | Provide funding for additional training on critical systems like Everbridge to ensure effective use during emergencies. Conduct regular drills focusing on using communication tools under simulated stress conditions | All Fire dispatchers trained on Everbridge. Fire dispatch could use in place of IaR. City safety team will be trained. Safety superusers for EB from each department. |
| Prioritize Mental Health and Peer Support | Establish formalized mental health debriefings and peer support systems for all staff following significant incidents. Encourage the inclusion of | CoSA exploring options to expand peer |

| Action Item | Details | Q4 Status |
|--|---|--|
| | stress management training in annual preparedness programs | support outside of SAFS. |
| Develop SOPs | Draft and implement policies to formalize recommendations, particularly around interagency coordination, SOPs, HR protocols, and mental health support for non-first responder staff. Policies should outline clear expectations for interagency collaboration and include frameworks for how SAFS, MES and RCMP coordinate during emergencies, emphasizing mutual support during critical response and recovery phases. | EM working with Safety on this |
| Establish HR Protocols for Staff in Crisis Situations | Develop clear protocols for engaging with staff next of kin and supporting injured staff in hospitals. Implement a policy to use employee numbers instead of names when communicating about injured or deceased staff to ensure confidentiality and professionalism. Assign HR to lead efforts in managing these scenarios effectively | Not started. |
| Address Business Continuity Challenges | <p>Ensure the City's BCP is robust and action-ready for prolonged operational downtime scenarios. Develop contingency plans for reassigning duties, maintaining equipment functionality, and ensuring service continuity during significant disruptions.</p> <p>It is the Department's responsibility to ensure staff cross-training to enhance operational resilience. Department plans are owned by Department heads. <i>Consider single points of failure.</i></p> | <p>Senior Leadership BCP Exercise and Leadership Team BCP Exercises conducted.</p> <p>Further division GCP exercises planned for 2026.</p> |
| Fulfill OHS Responsibilities | Emphasize that training staff in these drills and skills is the best practice and an OH&S responsibility to ensure their safety and preparedness during emergencies. | Ongoing |

Emergency Social Services Learning Event, April 2025 AAR

| Action Item | Details | Q4 Status |
|---|---|---|
| Establish a full-time Emergency Social Services Coordinator Position | Current capacity for ESS coordination is minimal and requires a dedicated staff to coordinate and complete tasks, training, liaising with ESS partners and stakeholders, improving plans and exercises. | Developing business case for 2028. Exploring term options for 2026 & 2027. |
| Develop Detailed ESS Role Guides | ESS role guides need more detail and clarity around roles. | Started, will be completed before the April 9, 2026 Functional Exercise |
| Implement Staff/Volunteer scheduling Program | Select and roll out a simple digital platform. Train ESS staff, volunteers and supervisors on usage. | Draft tool developed, in the review stage |
| Create and maintain supply checklists | Inventory existing supplies. Add checklist sheets and restocking instructions to totes. | Inventory Complete. Checklist and restocking instructions required. |
| Launch semi-annual ESS registration training | Currently use the provincial Registration and Reception Centre Program (RRCP) | Q4: The province is moving to a new registration system. ESS staff will be trained in 2026. |
| Introduce pilot 'Mental Health Support for Reception Centres' course | Ensure staff and volunteers are equipped to manage what they will encounter while working in ESS. | Exploring (capacity issue) Require an ESS Coordinator. |
| Develop Transportation request form. | | Investigating options |
| Create signage for Meal Distribution and Essential Services | | Ongoing |
| Build a volunteer skills inventory | Collect data on second languages and certifications (e.g., First Aid, Counselling). Maintain an updated database accessible to activation leads. | Exploring (capacity issue). Require an ESS Coordinator. |

Supercell 3.0, May 2025 AAR

| Action Item | Details | Q4 Status |
|---|---|--|
| Improve network reliability and infrastructure | Wi-Fi connectivity and server access experienced intermittent disruptions, which impacted the flow of real-time information. To ensure consistent access during critical operations, it is advisable to invest in redundant systems, enhance bandwidth, and implement backup communication platforms. | COMPLETE Another wifi box was installed, will monitor effectiveness. |
| Clarify communication pathways | Internal and inter-agency communication protocols require greater clarity. Clearly delineating reporting lines, contact hierarchies, and radio channel assignments would reduce confusion and enhance coordination during high-tempo operations. | Will be sorted at the 2026 TTX |
| Training for newly rostered staff | Some staff members new to their roles expressed uncertainty regarding key procedures and systems. Implementing targeted onboarding and role-specific scenario training will help ensure that all personnel can operate confidently within the Incident Command System (ICS) structure. | COMPLETE IMT onboarding sessions are ongoing. |
| Develop standardized templates and SOPs to enhance collaboration and improve situational awareness | Variability in tools and processes among agencies created inefficiencies in information exchange and task execution. Developing standardized templates, digital platforms, and standard operating procedures will enhance collaboration and improve situational awareness. | Ongoing |
| Optimize workspace and equipment | A more ergonomic layout, pre-staged equipment, and designated task-specific work zones would enhance operational flow. | Exploring |

Fibre Optic Cable Disruption August 2025 AAR

| Action Item | Details | Q4 Status |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| BCP Awareness | Ensure department and branch personnel are aware of their BCP. Discuss annually/biannually/or quarterly at staff meetings, depending on how critical the services/programs are to operations. Update department BCP as required. | BCP Exercise with Directors held October 2025. Directors need to share with their personnel. |
| CEMP Annex | Create a network/internet disruption annex within the CEMP. | Not started. 2026 project. |
| IMT Activation | <p>Activate key positions of the IMT and establish an ICP/ECC to manage prioritization of resources until all services are restored.</p> <p>Ensure communications are coordinated. External and internal.</p> | Discussion about activations during disruptions - education of when IMT activation is appropriate |
| Exercise | Conduct a cross-department continuity exercise focused on network disruptions. | COMPLETE BCP Exercise with Directors (Leadership) conducted. |