

St. John's Regional Fire Department



**Shutting Down a Region and a City
January 17th Mega Storm**



Agenda

- January 17th and days leading up
- Decision on SOE
- Challenges and Successes
- Lessons Learned
- Questions



Lead up to January 17th

- Environment Climate Change Canada began forecasting the storm several days out with 40-50cm possible
- Confident solution came Thursday AM with 75+cm accumulation expected, wind gusts 130+km/hr



Lead up to January 17th

- Normal storm preparations including fuel deliveries
- Commonly reach out to partners for check-ins and review of policies
- SJRFD reviewed protocols and staffed up based on anticipated call volumes



Decision on SOE

- Storm started early morning of January 17th and hourly rates of 4-5cm/Hr. became a reality
- By 11AM it became apparent that this was no normal storm and concern turned to safety of the public and the heavy equipment operators
- 11:30 AM the SOE was declared, the first in 35 years



Decision on SOE

- As the day progressed and nightfall came conditions deteriorated
- Approximately 11PM heavy equipment stationed at HSC, St. Clare's, Fire Stations and RNC HQ
- Approximately 5:30AM crews returned to clearing priority 1 roads.



Decision on SOE

- City of St. John's is North America's oldest City and so is the Act that enables it!
- 4 main areas restrictions
 - Transportation
 - Curfew
 - Close of business
 - Use of water



Challenges

- This was a public works event!
- It was also a Communications event;
 - The Mayor is the spokesperson
 - Many players, municipal, provincial and provincial agencies
 - A lot of misinterpretation and clarification required.





Challenges



St. John's. Photo by Bob Hallett.



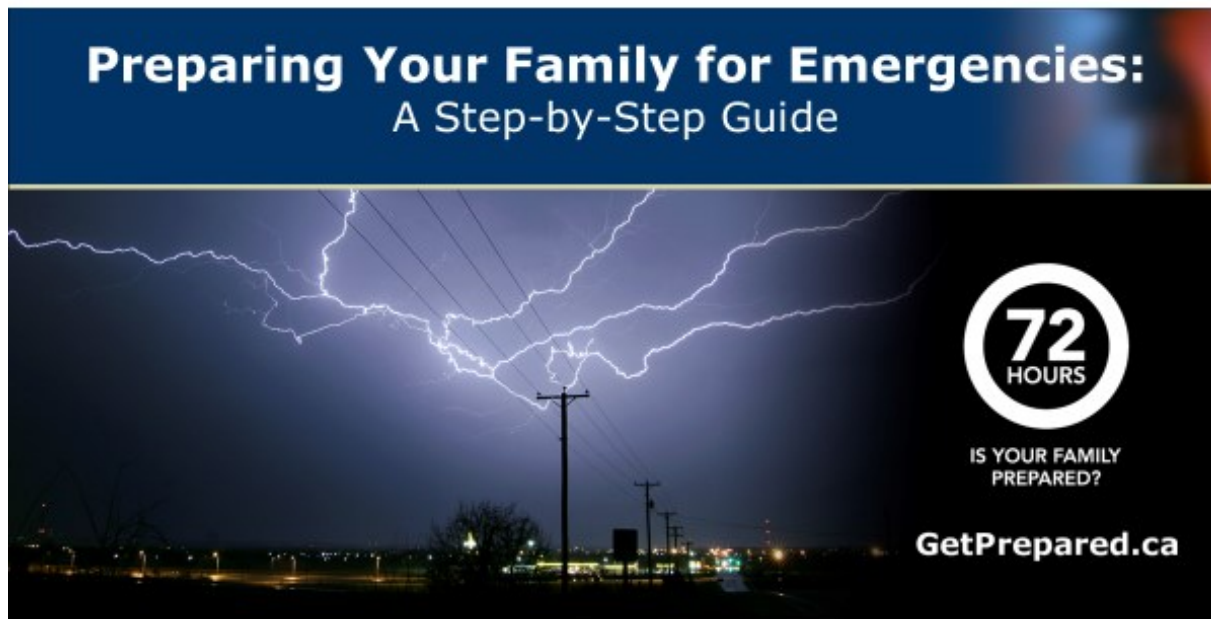


Challenges

- Eastern Health, Long-term Care and Critical industry do not stop!
- One region, but 4 separate entities with their own enabling legislation
- St. John's has
 - Two ports of entry (air/marine)
 - Center of arrival of goods
 - Main distribution of fuels
 - Majority of health care facilities and clinics



Challenges





Successes

- Support provided by the Canadian Armed Forces for vulnerable population
- Positive public support
- Positive sense of Community
- Networks





Lessons Learned

- Very difficult to shut down a City/region for 24 Hours let alone 9 days
- Just in time delivery/ inter-dependencies within and outside of organizations
- How do we collaborate with other jurisdictions while respecting each others independence. Much work ahead of us!



Lessons Learned

- 72 Hours of Preparedness
- The power of networks!



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Questions