

EXERCISE BRUNSWICK ALPHA

2018

POST EXERCISE REPORT



Report Date: 27 November, 2018

Table of Contents

Page 1 of 14

1. <u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</u>	3
1.1 <u>Background</u>	3
1.2 <u>Aim of document</u>	4
1.3 <u>Dates</u>	4
1.4 <u>Objectives</u>	5
1.5 <u>Scope</u>	6
1.6 <u>Participating Organisations</u>	6
1.7 <u>Exercise Observations and recommendations</u>	10
1.8 <u>Player Feedback</u>	11
1.9 <u>REMC Feedback</u>	15
2.0 <u>Summary</u>	16
<u>DISTRUBUTION LIST</u>	17

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Background

Exercise Brunswick Alpha 2018 (Ex BA 2018) was conducted on 13 June 2018, with a warm start taking place between the 7th and 12th of June culminating in a Province-wide exercise on the 13th of June 2018. The exercise was designed to allow all Municipalities, First Nation communities and Local Service Districts within in the province an opportunity to activate and exercise their Emergency Operations' centres, practice and to evaluate their plans, policies and procedures. In addition, communities had the chance to gain insight on emergency management best practices.

The exercise was based on a major hurricane that impacted communities throughout the province. This exercise allowed participating communities the opportunity to implement and validate emergency management plans and procedures, during a multi-jurisdictional, weather related event.

The exercise design concentrated on Tier one and Tier two objectives. Tier one objectives were determined at a provincial level and included notification, activation, communication, and an opportunity for participating communities to enhance their knowledge on States of Local Emergencies (SOLE) and Request for Assistance (RFA). Tier two objectives were those chosen by the communities, and varied greatly depending on the participant's desire and readiness.

Planning for the Exercise began in August 2017. The official planning schedule was as follows:

- 1 29 Nov 2017 – Announcement of the exercise to partners and the public;
- 2 18 Jan 2018 - Initial Planning Conference (IPC);
- 3 15 Mar 2018 – Main Planning Conference (MPC);
- 4 25 April 2018 – Final planning conference (FPC);
- 5 7 June 2018 Warm Start;
- 6 12 June 2018 Deployment and Opening of Provincial Emergency Command Post (PECP) in Bathurst N.B;
- 7 13 June 2018 Exercise Day;
- 8 14 June 2018 Post Exercise Review.

All participating communities were provided an opportunity to provide feedback for the creation of this document.

1.2 Aim of Document

This report is developed to provide observations, recommendations, and to identify best practices in areas of emergency planning and preparedness that should be sustained and areas that could be improved.

1.3 Dates

Key exercise dates:

- a. Warm start, 7 June, 2018.
- b. Start of the Ex, 0800hrs, 13 June, 2018.
- c. End of the Exercise 1600hrs, 13 June, 2018.
- d. Post Exercise review, 14 June 2018.

1.4 Objectives

The overarching objective of the exercise was to activate and establish participant's Municipal or Local Emergency Operations Centre's and/or Command Post. Objectives allowed for information sharing among selected Federal, Provincial, Municipal and Non-Government Departments, agencies and organizations, in response to a major provincial emergency. Specifically Brunswick Alpha Tier 1 objectives included;

- a. Activation of Municipal /local EOCs;
- b. Exercise local emergency response plans;
- c. Communications at all levels;
- d. Reporting requirements;
- e. Create discussion on State of Local Emergency/State of Emergency;
- f. Create discussion on Request for Assistance & Provision of Services (Canadian Armed Forces)

Some participating communities exercised to a Tier 2 level which were established and implemented at a local level. Some Tier 2 objectives included;

1. New Brunswick Emergency Measures Organization deployed the Provincial Emergency Command Post to Bathurst; and
2. 5th Canadian Division Support Base Gagetown deployed their Forward Reconnaissance Group to Bathurst;
3. Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Trunk Mobile Radio group tested Mutual Aid Talk group assignment procedures, and deployment of portable communications suite; and
4. Canadian Red Cross tested and practiced procedures for the activation and operation of a Regional shelter.

1.5 Scope

The scope of the exercise, developed provincially in conjunction with Joint Task Force Atlantic (JTFA), was designed to encourage maximum participation from all communities within the province, regardless of their level of preparedness. The degree of participation was based on ability and desire. This was the first exercise/event in a program that will be used to enhance resiliency into the future. There was limited involvement from provincial and Federal government departments and agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) during this first exercise.

1.5 Participating Organizations

The following corporations, departments, agencies, communities and organization participated as part of Exercise BRUNSWICK ALPHA 2018.

Corporation

1. Insurance Bureau of Canada
2. Saint John Energy
3. Horizon Health
4. Twin Rivers Mill

Non-governmental Organizations

5. Canadian Red Cross (CRC)

Municipal

6. Alma
7. Athoville
8. Balmoral
9. Bath
10. Bathurst
11. Beaubassin-est
12. Belledune
13. Beresford
14. Blacks Harbour
15. Bouctouche
16. Cambridge Narrows
17. Campbellton
18. Campobello Island
19. Cap-Pelé
20. Caraquet
21. Centreville
22. Charlo
23. Chipman
24. Cocagne
25. Dalhousie
26. Dieppe
27. Dorchester
28. Drummond
29. Dumfries Local Service District
30. Eel Ground First Nation
31. Eel River Bar First Nation
32. Eel River Crossing
33. Elsipogtog 1st Nation
34. Esgenoopetitj
35. Florenceville-Bristol
36. Fredericton
37. Fredericton Junction

38. Gagetown Village
39. Grand Bay-Westfield
40. Grand Falls
41. Grand Manan
42. Grande-Anse
43. Hampton
44. Hanwell
45. Hartland
46. Harvey
47. Haut Madawaska
48. Hillsborough
49. Kedgwick
50. Lac Baker
51. Le Goulet
52. LSM
53. LSM R10
54. Maisonnette
55. Madawaska
56. McAdam
57. Memramcook
58. Metepenagiag
59. Moncton
60. Nackawic
61. New Maryland
62. Nigadoo
63. Oromocto
64. Pabineau First Nation
65. Paquetville
66. Perth Andover
67. Perth Andover
68. Petit Rocher
69. Petitcodiac
70. Plaster Rock
71. Pointe Verte
72. Port Elgin
73. Quispamsis
74. Rexton
75. Richibucto
76. Riverside-Albert
77. Riverview
78. Rogersville
79. Rothesay
80. Rural community of Upper Miramichi
81. Rusagonis-Waasis
82. Sackville
83. Saint Andrews

84. Saint John
85. Saint Martins
86. Saint-Antoine
87. Salisbury
88. Shediac
89. Shippagan
90. St Andre
91. St Quentin
92. St. Stephen
93. St.George
94. Saint-Isidore
95. Stanley
96. St-Leonard
97. St-Louis-de-Kent
98. Sussex
99. Sussex Corner
100. Tide Head
101. Tracadie
102. Tracey
103. Upper Miramichi
104. Woodstock

Provincial

105. New Brunswick Emergency Measures Organization (NBEMO)
106. New Brunswick Power (NB POWER)
107. Trunk Mobile Radio Group
108. Red Cross
109. International Radio Group

Federal

110. Public Safety Canada - New Brunswick Regional Office
111. Joint Task Force Atlantic (JTFA) Canadian Armed Forces (CAF)
112. 5th Canadian Division Support Base Gagetown (5CSBG)
113. Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC)

1.7 Exercise Observations and Recommendations

The following observations and Recommendations were provided by participants;

1.7.1 Observation: Over all exercise planning, preparation and conduct went extremely well.

Recommendation: Continue with similar development and planning process for future exercises.

1.7.2 Observation: During the lead up to the exercise, the meetings held by the working group, were very formal and task orientated.

Recommendation: That future exercise “Working Group” meeting will be less formal and allow the WG members the opportunity to provide more input and in turn develop a sense of ownership of the exercise by being more involved in development.

1.7.3 Observation/Best Practices: The presentation of the MEL in a bilingual format was very user friendly and should be used for future exercises. Translation of injects and other related documents was very time consuming.

Recommendation: Continue the use of the MEL in the bilingual format; and allow additional time for the translation process.

1.7.4 Observation/Best Practice: The use of simulated media and social media feeds added significantly to the realism of the exercise and was very well received and widely used.

Recommendation: Continue the use of these Exercise enhancing tools and explore ways to expand their use, such as having weather products more widely available on them. Schedule more interviews to add to realism.

1.7.5 Observation: Some trusted agents were unsure of their role in the development of injects and required activities on the exercise day.

Recommendation: REMC’s were the primary links to participants from the municipalities and the Trusted Agents. Exercise Developers must take necessary steps to ensure that REMCs have ownership of the Exercise Injects and understand the role and responsibility of Trusted Agents. REMCs must be supported in their effort to teach, coach and mentor TAs from their regions. The development of a simplified inject form with attached user guide would be beneficial. JTFa could provide an inject development workshop or presentation for future exercises.

1.7.6 Observation: Some communities felt they were not challenged enough during the Exercise.

Recommendation: REMC's should continue to engage and encourage municipalities to understand the exercise development process, so that communities recognize that they are able to determine the level of challenge to meet their specific needs.

1.8 Player Feedback

Communities:

- 1.8.1 Upper Miramichi:** Everything went well for us. We learned quite a bit from it. We are going to revamp our plan a little bit and do some work around our EOC.
- 1.8.2 Cocagne:** -VNN/Chit Chat was enjoyed by all, except for a few hiccups while creating an account. More clarity should be given on the sign on page, i.e. name should be the name you wish to appear on the screen, username should be different, can be your email address, or should be different, whatever the case is.
- 1.8.3 Moncton:** Two of the municipalities had internal comms problems, were happy this happened during an exercise and not in reality. Lessons learned for them.
- 1.8.4 Port Elgin:** Use of mobile command post was completely transparent, couldn't tell PEOC wasn't in Fredericton. Good job!
- 1.8.5 Salisbury:** Some municipalities used this exercise as an opportunity to showcase their emergency plans to their non-involved staff. Many eyes were opened to the importance of having a plan, and how it is implemented.
- 1.8.6 Cap-Pelé:** Some municipalities also found areas where their established, but not often exercised plans were missing elements crucial to managing an emergency. Changes have already been made to address these issues.
- 1.8.7 Riverside Albert:** Clarity on who TAs should communicate with (REMC or EXCON or both?)
- 1.8.8 Hillsborough/Alma:** Injects were for the most part released on the hour or half hour. Would it be possible to spread them out?
- 1.8.9 Chipman:** The exercise that was done on June 13 was a good exercise but for us in Chipman, things didn't go as well as we hoped. We were unable to get on the Web page chitchat so we never got the full effects of the exercise. We also wanted to check our Ham operator by
- 1.8.10** Sending messages to your EMO room and have answers coming back via ham operator which didn't happen. The injects that we had were handled very well, good communication at the table. We as an EMO committee were glad to take part.
- 1.8.11 Caraquet:** Overall, the exercise was good, but I think it could have lasted half a day. A lot of downtime, at least on our side. We thought about making up our own problems but we were afraid that wouldn't work anymore after you gave us

some. We still have some things to do, especially with regard to supplies. However, we would really like to do an exercise in the fall specific to Caraquet.

1.8.12 Tracadie: The Tracadie Regional Municipality EOC participated in the provincial emergency simulation exercise. This is a report of what resulted from this exercise for our EOC. First, we are unanimous in that this type of simulation is a good exercise to check on the operation of your EOC. Following are the major points for our EOC:

- 1.8.12.1 Our team is well established and duties are distributed very well.
- 1.8.12.2 Helps to see what human resources are missing from our committee.
- 1.8.12.3 Enables us to determine the tools that could facilitate and improve our work.
- 1.8.12.4 We were questioning whether our policies and procedures were adequate for the situations, and if not, what we need to do to improve them.
- 1.8.12.5 Rectify some aspects related to communication to residents.
- 1.8.12.6 The scenario was very vague.
- 1.8.12.7 There was a lack of information on updates to the situation.
- 1.8.12.8 Important criteria were missing in order to decide on what action to take.
- 1.8.12.9 Need more different situations.
- 1.8.12.10 Such an exercise is very beneficial in order to prepare for a future situation.
- 1.8.12.11 Makes it possible to recall action to apply during such a situation.

1.8.13 Grande-Anse : The exercise went well overall. There is certainly a lot of work left to do but the committee is prepared to put in the effort. The most positive aspect of the exercise is that a lot of information was contributed by those present. We updated our list of contacts. We produced an information card for each person on the committee and a location to put them in. We established a second location for an EOC in case of need. Roland Savoie was very cooperative during the exercise and even made some suggestions for improvement. In short, there is still a lot to do, but this exercise was very beneficial from information as well as a team spirit perspective. Thanks to the entire team.

1.8.14 Shippagan : Shippagan EOC opened at 8:30 and closed at 15:00. Some gaps were noticed in the workings of the EOC but nothing serious. We were very satisfied with the training and results in general. Some difficulty accessing and viewing simulated social media sites.

1.8.15 Paquetville : The Alpha NB exercise for the village of Paquetville took place between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. today. Everything went well. Our municipal council was informed by e-mail of the stage of our interventions. Overall, the team managed the situation very well. The exercise was an opportunity for team members to discuss each person's importance. We also became aware of the

technical aspects (premises, telephone, physical layout of rooms, logistics of meals, the importance of forms and resources available close by). A bin with all the necessary materials would prevent delays and the EOC could be functional more quickly and especially more efficiently. An awareness of the proper and wise use of our HUMAN RESOURCES is essential for all the services affected. Establishment of schedules to avoid exhaustion or duplication of efforts.

1.9 REMC Feedback

- 1.9.1 REMC K. McGee:** Many municipalities were unprepared. Several were still working on plans; several others had not opened the plan since it was approved. On the other hand, Bathurst, Eel River –Dundee and Campbellton acquitted themselves admirably. This was accomplished by meeting and exercising beforehand. BEM and EOC training and refresher training is required for many municipalities. Too much traffic on the OPS account.
- 1.9.2 REMC K. Elisio:** Less military lingo. Some municipalities had never run an exercise and were not sure how to organize them on the day of/what the expectations were. They wanted us to provide more support. Moving forward, I will have to step that up, and provincially have those informal sessions. On the whole, they were able to have good discussions among different municipal and provincial agencies and were able to see gaps in their plan that need to be addressed. Many municipalities wanted to take part in a provincial hot wash. Though I did one regionally, and they are aware of the AAR report to be issued, they still wanted to participate.
- 1.9.3 REMC R. Pitre:** Clarity on expected actions by players (REMC's, municipal coordinators) during warm start and exercise. It is difficult to play in and manage an exercise at the same time. ECCC pushing out updates back to back, rather than consolidating. One thing during an exercise, but in real life this could lead to "weather warning fatigue". Using feedback I have already received from the people in my region, I am finding the need to be quite selective on the items I forward to my broadcast group. The recent string of frost warnings we received underline this. An opportunity for LSD's to be involved. Opportunities to include private sector interests.
- 1.9.4 REMC J. Cooling:** Exercise Brunswick Alpha was a well-received from the very beginning at the Initial Planning Conference, Region 11 and 8 Municipalities, LSD's and NGO's had a role to play and played it well, Municipal Emergency Managers were given the chance to look at plans and make the necessary changes, brief the Mayor and Councils prior to the exercise and were well prepared to participate, LSD's in Region 11 played a limited role and were still able to identify deficiencies and correct them as part of the exercise. Exercise Brunswick Alpha has proven that Emergency Management roles need to be filled and plans

updated annually to insure that New Brunswick Communities are prepared for whatever comes there way.

2.0 SUMMARY

The stated Exercise Aim was achieved with an extremely high level of participation and positive feedback from the Municipalities and Local Service Districts from across the province. The degree of cooperation between the communities and the Regional Emergency Management Coordinators was commendable, and serves as strong validation that New Brunswick's Regional concept to enhancing Emergency Management is paying dividends. The launch of Ex Brunswick Alpha 2018 was the first of its kind for the province of New Brunswick and will serve as a starting point to strengthen and make our communities more resilient. It is anticipated that this will be the first in a series of exercises, and that the planning for the next exercise will commence by late fall 2018.

Greg MacCallum

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