

PARTNERS IN PREPAREDNESS

COMMUNITY SECTOR NEWSLETTER



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New preparedness resources

The City of Toronto's Office of Emergency Management recently launched its [Partners in Preparedness website](#) with tools, resources and information to support organizations in preparing their employees, volunteers, services and facilities for emergencies.

In addition to sending out the Partners in Preparedness newsletters to people that have [signed-up](#), the Office of Emergency Management also posts each issue on the website.

The website also includes links to the Office of Emergency Management's new emergency preparedness videos. This video series aims to support Torontonians to take steps to be prepared for emergencies. There are five videos in total, covering the following topics:

- [preparedness tips for everyone](#)
- [preparedness tips for people living in high-rise apartments](#)
- [preparedness for blackouts](#)
- [preparedness for evacuations](#)
- [preparedness for flooding](#)

You can continue to check out the Partners in Preparedness website for the links to the latest resources and information.

Getting ready for emergencies in St. James Town

St. James Town is the largest high-rise community in Canada and one of the most densely populated neighbourhoods in Toronto. It is bound by Sherbourne Street to the west, Bloor Street East to the north, Parliament Street to the east and Wellesley Street East to the south.

St. James Town is a high turnover community, where newcomers to Canada make up a large portion of the population. St. James Town is a multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual neighbourhood.



The [St. James Town Service Providers' Network](#) has more than 30 agencies that support collaborative partnerships, community engagement and an integrated service coordination approach in this neighbourhood. The Service Providers' Network collaborates and coordinates with community members and stakeholders inside and outside the network to address the needs of residents and promote an inclusive and vibrant community. Under the umbrella of the Service Providers' Network, there are seven subcommittees that provide a number of innovative programs and initiatives to support this neighbourhood such as:

- the [St. James Town Community Corner \(The Corner\)](#), a physical space that fosters community engagement and improves community well-being by supporting residents and organizations to come together to access services and information
- [Health Access St. James Town \(HASJT\)](#), a community-based model of service coordination and collaboration where intake workers connect residents to health and social service agencies through a single intake process

The Corner and HASJT play an important role in supporting community members on a day-to-day basis. They also play an important role in supporting the community during emergencies.

For example, in January of this year, the high-rise apartment at 260 Wellesley Street East experienced a sudden power outage that left residents with no water, heat, or electricity for five days. The City of Toronto collaborated with a number of partners to respond to the residents' basic needs and allow them to safely remain in the building. The Corner and HASJT took on a local leadership role that included supporting regular check-ins for some of the more vulnerable building residents and enhancing information sharing and communications.

Based on this recent experience, the St. James Town Service Providers' Network is thinking of ways that it can help make the community more ready and resilient. It has developed a local crisis response protocol to coordinate the Network's response and recovery activities. It has also developed the Know Your Neighbour(hood) booklet, a preparedness resource for community members that highlights steps they can take to be emergency ready. The St. James Town Service Providers' Network will be hosting a community event this fall to launch the protocol and Know Your Neighbour(hood) booklet.

For more information about any of these initiatives, contact Nivedita Balachandran, Manager of Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement at The Corner at nbalachandran@stjamestown.org or Diana Mavunduse, Community Development Coordinator at Dixon Hall Neighbourhood Services at diana.mavunduse@dixonhall.org.

Alarmed for Life

Each year Toronto Fire Services runs Alarmed for Life, an information campaign to help community members understand what they can do to protect their families and homes from fire and carbon monoxide. The annual door-to-door campaign is directed at residents who live in single family homes, semi-detached houses and townhouses.

In Toronto, residential fires are usually started by cooking or smoking. The campaign highlights how people can stay safe:

- prevention - taking steps to stop fires from starting in the home
- detection - making sure to have working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms
- escape - having a home escape plan in the event of a fire

The campaign began in late June and runs until early September. This year, Toronto Fire Services crews are focusing their visits on large-scale townhouse complexes within the Toronto Community Housing portfolio. They are delivering a fire safety kit directly to residents' doorsteps. At the same time, residents can speak with firefighters about any concerns or questions.

The Alarmed for Life Home fire safety kit is available in 12 languages and can be downloaded from the City's [website](#).



Downtown Yonge's Community Engagement Team

The [Downtown Yonge Business Improvement Area \(BIA\)](#) represents businesses in one of the city's most vibrant neighbourhoods, in an area bound on the south by Richmond Street, on the north by Grosvenor and Alexander Streets, on the west by Bay Street, and on the east by parts of Victoria, Bond and Church Streets.

The Downtown Yonge area is rich with commerce, culture, and tourism opportunities, as well as higher learning institutions and places for people to live. It is also a neighbourhood facing common urban challenges such as high numbers of residents experiencing mental health and addiction problems, chronic homelessness and poverty.

These social issues can impact individuals working in businesses in the area, as they typically have no training or support to help de-escalate the types of situations that someone high on drugs or intoxicated and grappling with mental illness could create.

The Downtown Yonge BIA has been working with a wide range of partners over past few years to put plans and strategies in place to help address these types of events. Some of these initiatives have included:

- the [Walkabout](#), an outreach program where uniformed officers and elders from First Nation communities canvass the neighbourhood to offer support to chronically street-involved individuals.
- the [Drop-in Resource Booklet](#), a pamphlet and map that businesses can use to refer vulnerable individuals to local drop-in centres in the area
- the [Reporting Crime Infographic](#), which helps educate business owners and community members on how and when to report crimes
- training and awareness seminars on personal safety, mental health recognition and response topics for community members and frontline staff working with the public or providing customer service

DOWNTOWN



More recently, the Downtown Yonge BIA has developed the Community Engagement Team (CET) in partnership with [Margaret's](#). Launched in August 2018 as a pilot project through the BIA Innovation Fund, the CET is a dedicated two-person outreach team that operates from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week. This team is trained in de-escalation and mental health approaches and can be used as a first response resource when businesses owners are dealing with a person in distress that does not warrant a call to 9-1-1. In addition to their on-street engagements, the team has responded to 280 calls since it was created, many from smaller, street-front independent businesses that don't have access to security teams like the larger shopping centres.



Photo of the CET with a neighbourhood police officer. Photo credit to the Downtown Yonge BIA.

For more information about the CET pilot, contact the Downtown Yonge BIA at bia@downtownyonge.com or 416.597.0255.

Heat

Summer is now in full swing, with temperatures regularly climbing above 30°C. While it may seem like nothing but blue skies and sunshine, summer heat brings a host of unique risks that organizations should prepare for.

Are your staff or volunteers heat aware? Working in high temperatures can be dangerous and put individuals at risk of heat stroke or more serious consequences. When outdoors or in hot spaces, consider more frequent breaks, a reduced work pace, scheduling work for cooler parts of the day, and being prepared with water, sunscreen and hats. Training employees and volunteers on risks is important. Employers can learn more about working in extreme temperatures and their responsibilities on the [Ministry of Labour website](#).

On hot days, it is also important to help those most vulnerable to heat stresses. Check on elderly friends, relatives and neighbours, especially those without air conditioning and/or taking medications that make them more susceptible to heat. People who are marginally housed or experiencing homelessness are also at increased risk. If you see someone in need of assistance, you can call 311 for street outreach assistance. As always, in an emergency call 911.

You can learn more about heat preparedness and ways to beat the heat at toronto.ca/keepcool.

Toronto's first Resilience Strategy

Cities—similar to any individual or organization—are faced with two types of challenges: shocks and stresses. Shocks are sudden events that are immediate threats to wellbeing like natural disasters or loss of essential services. Stresses are chronic problems like economic inequality and housing shortages. To be resilient, we need to prepare to weather shocks and overcome stresses.

This year, the City of Toronto released Toronto's first ever [Resilience Strategy](#). The strategy is designed to help our city become a more equitable, liveable, prosperous and resilient place where every Torontonians can thrive. Actions in the Resilience Strategy are organized into three focus areas:



- people & neighbourhoods
- infrastructure
- leading a resilient city

Each focus area contains a series of goals and specific actions, which are the most critical projects Toronto must undertake to achieve resilience. Specific priority actions are things like retrofitting apartment towers, making investments to combat flooding, and providing support and tools to residents to make their homes and communities more resilient.

You can learn more about resilience, the City of Toronto's new Resilience Strategy, and what you can do to help your community thrive at toronto.ca/resilience.

How we identify risk

The Province's Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management has released [two updated Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment \(HIRA\) products](#):

- Hazard Identification Report 2019 - provides an overview of hazards that have the potential to impact Ontario
- Methodology Guidelines 2019 - provides a recommended method for conducting a HIRA

Toronto's Office of Emergency Management will adopt the new guidelines to its existing HIRA process. The HIRA is designed to help the City of Toronto and its partners to identify, understand, and evaluate the key hazards that have the potential to negatively impact residents, services and critical infrastructure.

Learn with TRCA

Did you know that high school students can earn an Emergency Management & Preparedness certificate from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)?

Designed in partnership with local municipalities, TRCA has developed a full-day course that provides students with an overview of the basics of emergency management, such as the role of an emergency operations centre and the principles behind the Incident Management System.

The course also emphasizes personal emergency preparedness, including how to develop a household plan. TRCA offers the course at the Claremont Nature Centre in Goodwood, Ontario.

For more information, visit TRCA's [Specialist High Skills Major Certificates webpage](#).



Key dates

Cyber Security Awareness Month: October

Fire Prevention Week: October 6-12

Ontario Disaster and Emergency Management Conference: October 9-10

International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction: October 13

National School Safety Week: October 17-23

Canadian Patient Safety Week: October 28 - November 1

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