

POST INCIDENT ANALYSIS

Town of Erin Watermain Break

Overview

On March 24th, 2023 at approximately 0900 hrs, the Town of Erin was notified that a contractor had struck the watermain below the water tower. Watermain pressure went from 80% to 20% in a matter of seconds. The Town was further advised that the south end of the village of Erin could be without water until the situation figured out. This situation escalated with the system being isolated at the break location, however, officials reassured the Town that the system would be back up and running by the end of the day.

This emergency unfolded during the Chamber of Commerce Mayor's Breakfast held at the Erin Legion. The Director of Infrastructure immediately departed the Legion upon notification of the situation. The Director of Fire & Emergency Services contacted the Station 10 Deputy and implemented Tanker Shuttle Operations for the Village of Erin.

At 0955 hrs, OCWA informed the Town of Erin that they had just spoken with Public Health and that they would be initiating a precautionary Boil Water Advisory. This would affect the entire Village of Erin. The Town of Erin immediately used their social media platforms as well as the Town's website and the Fire Station 10 Digital Sign to disseminate the Boil Water Advisory.

On March 26, 2023 at 1826 hours, OCWA informed the Town of Erin that they had received the water test results back and that we had received permission from the MOH to lift the Boil Water Advisory. This notification was communicated to the public via the Town's website, Social Media Platforms and the original alert was removed from the Station 10 Digital sign.

Between March 24, 2023 and March 26, 2023, numerous residents contacted the Town of Erin and/or members of Council to voice their concern regarding the incident and how the message had been disseminated to the public. Evidence of the public's concern was raised and discussed at the April 13, 2023 Council meeting and a Notice of Motion (attached to this report) was passed. This Notice of Motion directed staff to address and clarify the recent incident that led to a Boil Water Advisory and the communication flow that followed. The Notice of Motion further requested that staff clarify key roles and responsibilities along with a defined communication and action plan to notify residents and business owners in the Town of Erin for the purpose of managing or mitigating health and safety issues in an expedient manner.

Post Incident Analysis Outcomes

1. **OBSERVATION:** The Emergency Control Group did not meet to discuss and deal with the emergency/incident.

RECOMMENDATION: an emergency/incident that involves more than 3 members of the Emergency Control Group or an event that affects a large portion of the municipality shall result in a meeting with the full Town of Erin Emergency Control Group either in person in the Emergency Operations Center or virtually. The frequency of the meetings will be dependent on the scale and duration of the emergency/incident.

2. **OBSERVATION:** the Alternate Community Emergency Management Coordinator (Director of Fire & Emergency Services) failed to notify the Town's Primary CEMC (Wellington County CEMC).

RECOMMENDATION: The Town's Primary CEMC (County of Wellington CEMC) shall be notified of any emergencies/incidents or potential emergencies/incidents so that the Town of Erin can draw from the Wellington County shared emergency management resources.

3. **OBSERVATION:** The dissemination of the Boil Water Advisory was haphazard and did not effectively get out to all residents that were affected by this advisory.

RECOMMENDATION: As part of the Post Incident Analysis process, members of the Emergency Control Group met to discuss ways that we could improve emergency management communications. The following emergency management communication protocols were implemented:

- a. Town of Erin Website – Front page Alert
- b. Social Media – to include all platforms
- c. Local Radio Station (Erin Radio 91.7)
- d. On-Line Newspaper
- e. Notices given to all business
- f. Email notification using the Chamber of Commerce email group
- g. Notice Distribution by the Fire Department
- h. E-Newsletter
- i. Hotline – It was discussed that a hotline be set-up to handle up-to-date emergency notifications

- j. Alert Ready Program – The County of Wellington Emergency Management Team is currently working on Priority Usage and protocols to gain access and use this system. (this system is based on message urgency and the effect on the public)

NOTE: Our communications Officer is currently working with Wellington County Emergency Management Staff to prepare Notice/Alert message templates.

Conclusion

It's important that we look at this as a learning experience; where we identify our shortcomings and find ways to overcome them. With every emergency/incident, it's important to reflect on the outcomes (Post Incident Analysis) so that we can improve the way we respond and react to emergency situations. The greatest lesson that we can take away from this experience is that the Emergency Control Group should have gathered to discuss the situation and implement an incident action plan that would have addressed many if not all of the aforementioned Post Incident Analysis Outcomes. This requirement has already been reiterated to Control Group members and will be addressed again during this year's Emergency Management Exercise.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J.M. Sawkins', written in a cursive style.

J.M. Sawkins, CD, ECFO, CFEI
Director of Fire & Emergency Services/Fire Chief