



AUDITOR GENERAL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

ACCESSIBILITY • INDEPENDENCE • TRANSPARENCY • PERFORMANCE

BACKGROUND

March 28, 2019

DISTRICT OF MISSION PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

WHAT WE AUDITED

- The performance audit was on the topic, “*Emergency Management in Local Governments.*”
- We reviewed the District of Mission’s performance in emergency management, including plans related to the four phases: mitigation and prevention, preparedness, response and recovery. Our audit also covered business continuity management and related key elements such as governance, policies and procedures, communications, training and exercising and monitoring and reporting.
- We included Mission along with Capital Regional District, Town of Sidney and Fraser Valley Regional District in audits on this topic. These auditees were chosen because they represent different sizes of local governments in different geographical areas of the province and include both municipalities and regional districts.
- The audit covered the most current emergency management plans and programs that were in place as of November 2018. We reviewed the period from January 2014 to November 2018 for any financial data and trend analysis. We completed our examination work in October 2018.

WHY WE CHOSE THIS TOPIC

- Local governments are a major part of British Columbia’s public sector, providing a wide range of critical core services that could be affected by emergency events. Given the importance of these services, all local governments should take a comprehensive, coordinated and organized approach to emergency management.
- Emergency management involves all levels of government, each of which needs emergency management plans.

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- Provincial law requires that local governments create local emergency plans and guidelines setting out the priorities and means by which they will restore essential services following an emergency or disaster.

UNIQUE ASPECTS OF THE AUDIT

- During the period covered by the audit, B.C. communities faced several significant emergency events, including wildfires, flooding and increased concern over tsunami preparedness.
- The office of the AGLG initially planned to include the City of Quesnel and the Cariboo Regional District in audits under this topic but elected to change this plan due to wildfire events in the region in 2017 that led the Province of B.C. to announce a comprehensive independent review in that region. In order to not duplicate any of this work, the AGLG revised its list of auditees to instead include District of Mission and Fraser Valley Regional District.

WHAT WE FOUND

- The District of Mission had some foundational elements of an emergency management program in place, but it partially met or did not meet most of the expectations included in our audit objectives. Our review indicated that:
 - The District partially complied with emergency management statutory requirements
 - The District did not have an effective emergency management governance structure and processes
 - Almost every aspect of the District's emergency management and business continuity planning, resourcing, training, exercising and performance management need to be developed or significantly strengthened
 - To more effectively deliver its emergency management services and be better prepared for any future disruptive events, the District should take a more proactive approach to its emergency program.

WHAT WE RECOMMEND

- We have made 14 recommendations aimed at helping the District of Mission significantly improve its emergency management and business continuity activities.

- Our recommendations include proposed actions to help the District of Mission work towards fully meeting their statutory requirements and enhance their emergency management and business continuity management by:
 - Reviewing its governance structure and processes
 - Strengthening emergency planning and business continuity processes and documentation, including risk assessment, communication, coordination, collaboration, training and exercising
 - Ensuring cost-effective resourcing
 - Continuing its efforts to build public awareness of personal emergency preparedness and the District's emergency management program
 - Improving data collection, analysis, monitoring and reporting on its emergency management program

ABOUT THE AGLG

- This is the third performance audit report issued by the office of the AGLG on this topic and the 34th overall report released by the office since its 2013 opening, including six AGLG Perspectives booklets.
- The office has now released audit reports on six different topics, covering local governments in different regions of the province.
- Reports on Capital Regional District and Town of Sidney's emergency management were previously released; a report on Fraser Valley Regional District will follow in coming months.

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