The Evolving Roles of Emergency Managers

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Abstract:

This study examines how emergency managers' current and future roles and job duties are evolving in a profession that is maturing towards full stature. The study explored whether emergency managers need to enhance their education, professional credentials, skills, knowledge, and key competencies to perform their role today and into the future. This study involved interviews of mayors, chief administrative officers, and emergency managers from randomly selected municipalities in Ontario, which led to an understanding of the emergency manager's role from different perspectives. The major findings and their implications showed that emergency managers are often seen as emergency responders, that they need professional certification, that future practitioners will require a degree in emergency management, that they must educate others to overcome the apathy of their discipline, and that their role will evolve towards building disaster-resilient communities.

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Acronyms:

AMO	Association of Municipalities of Ontario
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CEM®	Certified Emergency Manager
CEMC	Community Emergency Management Coordinator
EMO	Emergency Management Ontario
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
IAEM	International Association of Emergency Managers
MRP	Major Research Project
OAEM	Ontario Association of Emergency Managers
RSO	Revised Statute Ontario
US	United States

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Introduction

Disasters have become more complex over time, as have the roles of emergency managers, who face heightened expectations from decision makers, policy makers, and the public, most of whom do not understand and support the role well. This chapter is based upon my Major Research Project (MRP) in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Disaster and Emergency Management at Royal Roads University. This study focused on determining how emergency managers' current and future roles and job duties are evolving within a maturing profession, and to discover whether emergency managers today need to enhance their education, professional credentials, skills, knowledge, and key competencies to be able to perform their jobs and deal with their evolving roles in the future.

The study focus is only on the municipalities in Ontario, yet it is understood that a national or Canada-wide perspective would provide ideal research for comparison and insight across the country. Ontario legislation currently mandates that emergency managers (also known as community emergency management coordinators [CEMCs]) perform essential-level[2] program tasks (Government of Ontario, 2008). However, the evolving role also includes discretionary strategic higher-level (comprehensive) program tasks and functions

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[2] In 2004, Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) developed three emergency management program levels (essential, enhanced and comprehensive) for municipalities and provincial ministries to implement. Only the essential level program is mandated by provincial regulation, and the enhanced and comprehensive program levels are recommended by EMO.

that a few emergency managers rather unnoticeably perform and that wholly depend upon their experience, knowledge, contacts, level of energy, and skills.

In recognizing that "government emergency preparedness and response in Canada is in the first instance the responsibility of the elected officials of the affected municipality" (Kuban, 1995, p. 105), emergency managers are leading the emergency management program's mission often without much direction beyond ensuring that the municipality complies annually with the legislation. Although emergency management has evolved over the last 60 years from civil defence to a discipline of its own, it is not common knowledge what emergency managers do or what their role is, and other disciplines continue to have influence over them. As McEntire (2007) affirmed, "The burden of dealing with a disaster is never felt more intensely than at the community level. For this reason, it is imperative to understand local emergency management organizations" (p. 168). Yet the mission statement of the emergency management office, like the emergency manager's role, is often invisible and poorly understood within a community until a disaster strikes. McEntire explained that "emergency managers may therefore be regarded as public servants who employ knowledge, techniques, strategies, tools, organizational networks, and successfully deal with their impacts in order to protect people, property, and the environment" (p. 169). Unfortunately, this view of emergency managers is not readily apparent to local officials, senior municipal staff, community organizations, and citizens. Therefore, emergency managers certainly have a stake in promoting their mandate, understanding how their role is evolving, and determining what actions they can take to gain insight, elevate their visibility and credibility, and advance their profession.

Emergency managers are largely trained based on apprenticeship and practice without certification and regard for disaster-research publications from the scientific community. In 10 years, as the emerging profession matures, the complexity of disasters continues to grow, and the expectations of mayors and chief administrative officers (CAOs) escalate, emergency managers will likely be highly skilled, specialized professionals who perform complex roles and job duties that focus on community resiliency and sustainability in addition to their current tasks. The current practice of hiring emergency managers with no credentials and from other professions may change substantially, especially in Canada, where formal education in emergency management is now offered and becoming more readily available.

Understanding how emergency managers' roles are evolving requires research on their job duties and skill sets now compared to what they might be in 10 years. It is also important to identify the trends in the expectations of emergency managers' roles and duties as those who employ them and count on their professional judgments perceive them; to explore how emergency managers, mayors, and CAOs see the current practice as the role advances; and to determine

what they deem to be essential requirements of the discipline. This is significant because it will reflect the extent to which the emergency management profession will evolve towards full maturity.

Review of the Literature

This section provides an overview of the existing literature that reflects the research question: "How are the emergency manager's roles and job duties evolving today as they, mayors, and CAOs perceive them?" This synopsis specifically addresses the role of emergency managers today; their evolving skills, job duties, and competencies, what their role will look like in the future and includes the legal framework for emergency management in Ontario.

The Role of the Emergency Manager

Disasters have enormous impacts on people and their communities. All levels of government, particularly the local level, have a responsibility to prepare for, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from impending hazardous threats and actual events. As Waugh (2000) stated, "Emergency management is the quintessential government role" (p. 3), which thus tasks emergency managers with developing and implementing such programs. It must be recognized that "the field of emergency management consists of a wide variety of people and organizations with vastly diverse backgrounds and perspectives" (Ward & Wamsley, 2007, p. 217). This leads to the challenge of defining and understanding the role of emergency managers and the key tasks that they undertake to effectively manage disasters. Pine (2006) reported that "the job of an emergency manager is to ensure that all parts of the organization are coordinated internally and with external organization[s] that are involved in emergency management activities" (Contributions of Management to Emergency Management Theory section, ¶ 15). Essentially, municipalities have established an emergency management function within their organizations, and emergency managers lead the mission. An emergency manager's role "is an integral and critical part of the day to day operations of that community or organization" (Dynes, 1998, p. 6).

The focus of emergency management practice has evolved since the early civil defence days of the 1950s, and the role of an emergency manager has grown from being only reactive and response focused to include a proactive and preventative focus. The practice has also evolved from an autocratic management philosophy to a more collaborative and comprehensive style today. The initial disaster decision-making "command-and-control civil defence approach" (Britton,

2001, p. 45) once reflected the types of roles that emergency managers fill, but there has been an ongoing transformation.

In the mid 1970s municipalities began to hire full-time emergency managers (Britton, 2001; Mileti, 1999; Perry, 1991). Whether an emergency manager is a full-time position depends generally on the size of the municipality (Lindell, Prater, & Perry, 2006). "Local decision makers usually turn to one of the emergency services to handle emergency management as an additional duty" (Selves, 1997, p. 65). Schneider (2003) concurred and noted that emergency management "became an add-on or part time responsibility for an already overburdened local official such as a fire chief" (p. 5). Such appointments have led to narrow, limited, and technical roles of emergency service officials with insufficient training and expertise (Schneider, 2003).

By the late 1980s and early 1990s the emergency manager's role was beginning to change, and there was "a different set of imperatives [sustainable development and public demand for increased safety] that started to make demands on, and necessitated a re-evaluation of, the role and direction of emergency management" (Britton, 2001, p. 45). Municipalities began to redefine the roles of emergency managers and examine the skill set required for the position because traditional emergency management approaches were not reducing disaster threats and losses (Thomas & Mileti, 2003). Because of the enormous devastating impacts of major disasters, emergency management rose to "the political forefront" (Perry, 1991, p. 222). Significant attention was given to the emergency manager's activities, role, scope, and qualifications. No longer were emergency managers invisible in their communities as they had been for decades; they have become highly accountable, particularly following a disaster (Perry, 1991).

In 2004 and 2006 the government of Ontario updated the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, Revised Statute Ontario (RSO), Chapter E9 (Government of Ontario, 2006). The Act establishes the province's legal basis and framework for managing emergencies and defines the authority, responsibilities, and safeguards accorded to provincial ministries, municipalities, and specific individual appointments (Emergency Management Ontario [EMO], 2008). For the first time in the province's history, an emergency management regulation (Ontario Regulation 380/04) was created and came into force in 2004 that required all municipalities to meet the essential-level program standards on an annual basis. Section Two of the Regulation prescribes the Municipal Standards, which entails conducting a hazard identification and risk assessment, designating a CEMC, establishing an emergency management program committee, establishing an emergency control group, designating a primary and secondary emergency operations centre (EOC), designating an emergency information officer, submitting an approved emergency response plan, conducting

training, hosting an exercise, identifying critical infrastructure, and conducting a public awareness program (Government of Ontario, 2008).

The ability of emergency managers to manage the expectations of elected and appointed officials as well as those of the public has become a major challenge (Ward & Wamsley, 2007). In spite of all of the efforts to date, the emergency manager's role "is neither easily performed nor well understood. Nor is it a readily accepted role in many local jurisdictions" today (Kreps, 1991, p. 49). Disaster researchers have concurred that emergency management programs (staffing, equipment, resources) have been typically poorly funded because governments are somewhat reluctant to spend money on mitigating or preparing for an event that has yet to happen or may never occur (Kreps, 1991; Lindell et al., 2006; Schneider, 2003; Selves, 1997; Waugh, 2005). Emergency managers today must have effective, well-developed strategies to increase their credibility and visibility with top elected and appointed officials in an effort to obtain the program resources they need (Kreps, 1991). Waugh (2007) stated:

However, recent events have demonstrated the lack of understanding of emergency   management among policy makers at all levels, and discussions within the profession   have demonstrated a need for greater clarity for those who are trying to fulfill their   responsibilities to their communities and organizations. (p. 16)

Kreps stressed the importance of emergency managers' credibility so that they will not "be ignored before an emergency and bypassed during it" (p. 48). Emergency managers need to demonstrate competent performance, even in the absence of a disaster, to earn credibility with the key officials of the departments and organizations with which they collaborate on various emergency management initiatives (Kreps, 1991). "It is critical that mayors, governors, presidents, and other public and non-profit officials understand the roles of emergency managers in order for them to support and facilitate those roles" (Waugh, 2005, p. 15).

Today, many municipalities have moved towards a comprehensive community process, and the role of the emergency manager has evolved accordingly to encompass hazard mitigation and sustainable development initiatives (McEntire, 2007; Schneider, 2003). As well as preparedness, response, and recovery activities, emergency managers today have become increasingly involved in community resiliency strategies and risk management and "should link emergency management concepts and practices with wider community management practices and processes" (Britton, 1999, p. 8). Simpson and Howard (2001) contended that decision makers reward emergency managers who focus on products such as the preparation of an emergency plan rather than on process-oriented activities such as sustainable development. Britton and Schneider (as cited in Schneider, 2003) believed that the emergency manager's role should be overhauled again today to include the broader strategic initiatives of a

municipality: "Emergency management . . . is overdue for re-articulation in terms of a more strategic public administration" (p. 3). Municipal officials in consultation with emergency managers should consider broadening the role to a more holistic approach. Schneider stated:

> Many practicing emergency managers accustomed to the traditional or 'old' definition of their role may resist the suggestion of an expanded view of their role, but such a transformation is necessary to promote greater productivity and success in the broader and more strategic environment that shapes the contemporary work of emergency management. (p. 5)

Although emergency management continues to be seen as a response activity in some municipalities today, this is beginning to change. "There is a growing consensus that the limited, task oriented, technical, and disaster specific orientation of the old emergency management must be replaced with a broader more strategic framework for the profession" (Schneider, 2003, p. 6). Today, emergency managers must understand how governments, organizations, and communities function because their role is more strategic and administrative than operational. "With this significant shift, the emergency manager will move in wider circles to interact with decision makers and impact policy for a much more proactive program" (Moore, 1994, p. 7). Yet Ward and Wamsley and several disasters researchers (Haddow & Bullock, 2005; McEntire, 2007; Mileti, 1999; Waugh, 2007) contended that in the wake of 9/11, emergency management in recent years has focused too much on the risk of terrorism with the re-emergence of 'command and control,' which has resulted in diminished attention paid to natural and technological disasters.

The emergency manager's role is becoming ever more complicated and highly specialized. "Emergency management is becoming an ever more complex career field that requires professional skills and interagency cooperation at all levels to develop integrated emergency response plans and well coordinated response actions" (Houck et al., 2007, p. 19). As disaster trends demonstrate more complex events, emergency managers face problems today that "they have seldom before confronted" (Darlington, 2000, p. 11). Attempting to provide sufficient coordination that involves intergovernmental departments and multi-organizational entities is a tough role for emergency managers (Britton, 2001). "The emergency manager must be the organizational leader who manages the conflicts that inevitably arise from differing philosophies and territorial imperatives, and facilitates the integration and implementation of emergency management policies, plans and programs" (Petak, 1985, p. 5). Overall, governments are understanding more that emergency management is a complex political, economic, and social activity (Petak, 1985). This complexity has led to an ongoing evolution of the emergency manager's role, and it must be recognized that "the increased complexity has made it difficult to determine how the system

functions and, when it fails, how to identify who or what within it has failed and to what degree" (Ward & Wamsley, 2007, p. 220).

In Drabek's (1987) benchmark study of professional emergency managers from 62 American cities and counties, he identified the roles of emergency managers that local government officials perceived as successful. These roles included "integrators, mediators, facilitators, or compromisers rather than autocrats" (Kreps, 1991, p. 49). Local officials in Drabek's study perceived professionalism, individual qualities (such as personality, communication skills, and unique personal skills), and emergency management ability as key characteristics of effective emergency managers. Their role is to cultivate and maintain networks within intergovernmental structures prior to an emergency to build an integrated emergency management system capable of coping with hazards (Kreps, 1991; Nicholson, 2006). Additionally, this role includes ensuring internal and external coordination and collaboration among organizations involved in emergency management by leading and directing such activity (Kreps, 1991; McEntire, 2007; Nicholson, 2006; Pine, 2006). This is a monumental task for emergency managers. The strategic relationships that emergency managers establish are fundamental to the success of the response and recovery strategies (Waugh & Streib, 2006).

Emergency management is becoming its own discipline (Darlington, 2000; Lindell et al., 2006; Oyola-Yemaiel & Wilson, 2005; Schneider, 2003), and the image that practitioners have of themselves and the perceptions of others (elected officials, chief administrators, agency heads) have evolved (Lindell et al.). In an emerging profession, emergency managers are seeking association membership and professional certification and engaging in the development of a body of knowledge (Moore, 1994; Oyola-Yemaiel & Wilson, 2005; Wilson, 2001). Emergency management is becoming a career of first choice by newly educated professionals, who are keenly interested in acquiring certification (Auf der Heide, 1989; Darlington, 2000). "The process of professionalization has been accompanied by the formation of organizations and associations concerned with the training of and awarding credentials to emergency management specialists, the development of specialized publications, and the spread of professional meetings and training" (Mileti, 1999, p. 228). Kreps (1991) commented, "At this point in the development of emergency management, a professional role is unfolding amid uncertain expectations rather than in relation to well-defined standards of performance. The more successful emergency managers, in particular, are necessarily engaged in role making" (p. 49).

Today, education and knowledge are viewed as necessary factors in the evolution of the emergency management profession (Britton, 1999; Darlington, 2000; McEntire, 2007). "The key is that the development of professionals in emergency management requires a formal educational process and an intentional

exposure to emergency management theory and concepts" (Pine, 2006, The Development of Management Theory and Practice section, ¶ 5). Disaster researchers have begun to recommend specific areas of study that should be included in universities' emergency management curriculum. Schneider (2003) emphasized that "political and organizational analysis, strategic thinking, and leadership may be increasingly important concepts of study for emergency managers" (p. 3). Each disaster researcher has a unique perspective on core curriculum.

The Evolving Skills and Key Competencies

The skills and key competencies of today's emergency managers have substantially developed over the last five decades. Mileti (1999) suggested that "today there is wide acceptance of the ideas that managing disasters requires specialized knowledge, skills, and training" (p. 228). Houck et al. (2007), McEntire (2006), and Moore (1994) concurred with Mileti's appraisal of the wide range of abilities that emergency managers today must possess. Lindell et al. (2006) and McEntire (2006) also agreed that emergency managers' knowledge base must be broad in scope and encompass an understanding of different disciplines. "The emergency manager is a generalist who knows where to find and how to request the services of specialists" (Lindell et al., p. 351).

Given the complexity of addressing the multitude of disaster-related issues across organizations, it is critical that emergency managers have well-developed interpersonal skills. Concurring with Drabek (1987), Waugh and Streib (2006) recalled that "by the 1980s, it was recognized that the effectiveness of emergency management programs rested primarily on the interpersonal skills of emergency managers rather than on their technical skills" (p. 134). This is consistent with the evolution of emergency managers' role from solely operational to more strategic, which requires tremendous interaction and support from decision makers.

To be effective in their communities, emergency managers must understand the processes of government, be politically astute, and have greater technical knowledge (Perry, 1991). Many disaster researchers have stressed that it is crucial that emergency managers understand management principles (Drabek, 2007; Lindell et al., 2006; Perry, 1991; Pine, 2006). Additionally, emergency managers must also have communications, administrative, and coordination skills to successfully implement a comprehensive emergency management program that the public, emergency responders, and elected and appointed officials can understand. Lindell et al., in reviewing Drabek's (1987) views, concurred that "critical skills also include agenda control, constituency support building, budget, and financial analysis expertise, coalition building skills, and innovation and

entrepreneurial skills" (p. 350). Essentially, today's emergency managers must have a broad range of management and administrative skills.

Because the mission of local emergency management has broadened over the years, Thomas and Mileti (2003) proposed that emergency managers today require "knowledge and skills in the natural and physical sciences, the social and behavioral sciences, aspects of engineering, and technology" (p. 17). In managing the expectations of those they serve, emergency managers must "understand complex physical and social systems, conduct sophisticated outcomes analyses, and offer long-term solutions to recurring problems" (Darlington, 2000, p. 11). They need to acquire these skills through education offered at academic institutions. Over the past decade emergency managers have become more conversant with the concept of structural mitigation, including the strengthening of buildings and infrastructure exposed to hazard risks. Emergency managers are involved with public safety and security, business affairs, public and information affairs, information systems administration, communication technologies, mapping sciences and hazard modeling, legal affairs, and coordination with numerous other organizations (McEntire, 2006, 2007; Pine, 2006; Waugh & Streib, 2006). McEntire (2006) explained:

> But, because disasters are often and incorrectly viewed as uncommon events that are separated from daily human activities, emergency managers should also gain skills in the 'art' of their craft as well (e.g., sales, marketing, inter-personal communication, persuasion, argument, public speaking, networking, political posturing, cajoling, societal mobilization, etc.). (The Merit of Diverse and Integrated Findings section, ¶ 8)

Drabek(1987) found that the perceived skills of successful emergency managers include communication and human resource management, organizational astuteness, and the ability to maintain control under stress (Kreps, 1991). Blanchard (2001, 2003, 2005, 2008) of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Higher Education Program described emergency management professionals as educated and identified the core competencies of the successful 21st-century emergency manager as interpersonal relations, political savvy, administration, leadership, professionalism, public policy, subject-matter knowledge, vision, technical ability, knowledge of hazards, analytical thinking, ability to synthesize information, communication (both written and oral), leadership and followership, networking and consensus building, problem solving and strategic thinking, diversity sensitivity, creativity, imagination, and adaptability.

The emergency manager's role has changed a great deal over the last decade, and so have the educational requirements for the position. Many municipalities are seeking and/or demanding the hiring of emergency managers with degrees specifically within the field of study. Municipalities with university-educated emergency managers are "more likely to implement a multitude of the more effective mitigation strategies and to coordinate an appropriate disaster response" (Fischer, 1996, p. 215).

There has been explosive growth in higher-education programs, both undergraduate and graduate, that are designed to provide the fundamental knowledge and skills that emergency managers need (Darlington, 2000; Mileti, 1999; Pine, 2006). As of October 21, 2008, the United States (US) alone had 159 emergency management higher education programs (up from 4 in 1994); 63 Homeland Security/defence and terrorism higher education programs; 10 international disaster relief/humanitarian assistance programs; 17 public health, medical, and related programs; and 22 "other" related programs (FEMA, 2008). Canada currently has 2 graduate programs, 1 undergraduate program, and several college diploma and certificate programs (Canadian Centre for Emergency Preparedness, 2008).

Emergency Managers of the Future

The next generation of emergency managers will influence the creation of safe communities by promoting disaster resiliency and sustainable development (Blanchard, 2001): "Emergency managers will also need to improve and expand their skills in recognizing the social, cultural, economic, and political environment in which they operate" to "become catalysts for progressive change" (p. 7). Schneider (2003) concurred with Blanchard's opinion and suggested that emergency managers provide value to their communities by focusing on sustainability and hazard mitigation. Additionally, Britton (2001) recommended that the focus of emergency managers expand to include "sustainable hazard management, community resilience and risk management" (p. 44). Furthermore, Britton noted that "the components of emergency management need to change from a traditional and often exclusive emergency services fraternity that is typically focused on hazard agent preparedness and response to a far wider consortium of agencies, skills and practices" (p. 44). Haddow and Bullock (2005) and McEntire (2005) envisioned that emergency managers in the future will focus on hazard mitigation and recovery activities, in addition to their current preparedness and response duties. According to Thomas and Mileti (2003), emergency managers of the future need to have knowledge beyond responding to an emergency, and the knowledge should be broad in hazard scope. Furthermore, "future emergency managers must have an appreciation for complex, compound

or cascading disasters" (McEntire, 2006, The Need for Multi- or Inter-disciplinary Research section, ¶ 2).

In FEMA's Higher Education Project presentation overview, Blanchard (2008) described the next generation of emergency managers:

> College educated (with many emergency management degrees), younger (more diverse and culturally sensitive), knowledge base (science, research, case studies of lessons learned), has studied and developed emergency management fundamentals and competencies (deeper understanding of hazards, disasters, what to do about them, analytical, communication skills, technologically more capable/ adept, e.g. GIS applications, and programmatically rooted in comprehensive and integrated emergency management), life-long learner (reads hazard, disaster, emergency management research literature), emergency management career of first choice, upwardly and geographically mobile, full-time emergency management professional (executive-style manager, valued and respected), does strategic planning with jurisdictional stakeholders (proactive partner, facilitator, net-worker), broader range of working contacts, does hazard, risk, vulnerability assessments, risk-based approach to emergency management (emphasizes social vulnerability reduction and building resilience), joins professional associations, and better paid an funded. (pp. 32-33)

It is unclear whether in the future emergency managers' reporting structure within local governments will change. Haddow and Bullock (2005) foresaw emergency managers of the future reporting directly to their CAO and "work[ing] closely and on the same level of other major department heads in the local government" (p. 17). This will increase an emergency manager's influence within the municipality and thus potentially result in a more disaster-resilient culture and community.

The Research Study

Organizational Context

Emergency management is primarily and fundamentally the responsibility of local government, and therefore the roles and job duties of emergency managers are critical because they relate directly to the coping capacity of a municipality. As emergency managers' roles and job duties evolve over the next decade, ideally, so will the ability of the municipality as it "coordinates and integrates all activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, or mitigate against threatened or actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters" (Library of Congress, 2006, p. 1394).

Approach to Study

To determine how an emergency manager's roles and job duties are evolving today, it is important to consider the perspectives of mayors, CAOs, and emergency managers themselves. Mayors, their councils, and the CAOs provide the political impetus in their organizations, determine their municipality's strategic priorities and initiatives, set the vision, influence program budgets, and establish the municipality's risk tolerance for hazardous threats. Understanding the perceptions of emergency managers alone will not inform such practitioners how they could possibly evolve their role because their mayor and the CAO highly determine the tasks that they perform and their responsibilities, and it is therefore imperative to seek the opinions and perspectives of mayors and CAOs.

Study Participants

Every municipality in Ontario has a mayor, a CAO, and an emergency manager, or the equivalent of these offices or positions known by other titles. These three groups have direct responsibilities and influence over emergency management programs in their municipalities. Furthermore, mayors and CAOs have influence over the roles and duties of their emergency managers. As the role of the emergency manager continues to evolve, it was important to understand and examine how these three groups viewed the current practice moving forward into the next decade. The participants in this qualitative study were mayors, CAOs, and emergency managers from municipalities in Ontario who are all directly involved in the research question (Stringer, 1999). To conduct this research and examine how the emergency managers' roles and job duties are evolving today as these groups perceive them, I selected a small representative sample of mayors, CAOs, and emergency managers for a telephone interview from amongst the 445 small, medium, and large municipalities in Ontario. I selected a sample size of 27 interviewees who consisted of nine mayors, nine CAOs, and nine emergency managers. Table 1 depicts an interviewee matrix showing the participant allocation.

Table 1 - Interviewee matrix

Stratum	Population of municipality	Number of municipalities in the strata	Mayors	CAOs	Emergency managers
1	1–99,999	412 (93%)	3	3	3
2	100,000–249,999	19 (4%)	3	3	3
3	Over 250,000	14 (3%)	3	3	3

Methodology

By talking to mayors, chief administrators, and emergency managers directly, I obtained their perceptions to inform stakeholders in the emergency management community (Palys, 1997). Because central to this study were the opinions, thoughts, and perspectives of mayors, elected officials, and emergency managers, the interviews with these officials was crucial to the data collection, "particularly when investigators are interested in understanding the perceptions of participants or learning how participants come to attach certain meanings to phenomena or events, interviewing provides a useful means of access" (Berg, 1998, p. 63).

Telephone interviews were conducted with the nine mayors, nine CAOs, and nine emergency managers from October 15, 2008 to November 26, 2008. Because "the use of a tape recorder has the advantage of allowing the researcher to record accounts that are both detailed and accurate" (Stringer, 1999, p. 70), I recorded all of the interviews using a voice recorder and then transcribed the recordings verbatim. At the beginning of each interview I assigned the participant a unique three-digit identifier number; the first number represented the size of the municipality, the second number represented the group, and the last number represented the participant's place within the group. This allowed me to provide anonymity to the participants and their municipalities in the information that I collected from them.

Study Findings

To understand the perceptions of the mayors, CAOs, and emergency managers, it is necessary to recognize the legislated emergency management requirements of municipalities in Ontario: "Most provinces have legislation which *mandates* their municipalities with the tasks of preparing for emergencies *and* of responding to these emergencies when they occur" (Kuban, 1995, p. 105). Understanding the legislative context will make the findings of this study on the evolving roles of emergency managers evident.

Ontario Legislative Context

The Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, RSO 1990 C E9 is the enabling legislation for managing emergencies in Ontario (Government of Ontario, 2006). Since 2004 each of the 445 municipalities in Ontario must by regulation annually conform to the municipal standards, which includes the appointment of a designated CEMC (or emergency manager) through a local by-law resolution (Government of Ontario, 2008).

The role of the Emergency Manager

Mayors, CAOs, and emergency managers themselves perceive that the role of the emergency manager has evolved over the last five years. To a moderate degree, each of these groups has a different view of the role.

The mayors perceived that the emergency manager's role is to ensure that upper- and lower-tier municipalities are able to respond to an emergency in a coordinated manner. Additionally, the mayors count on the emergency manager to instil confidence in the public when a disaster strikes. They expect the emergency manager to have in place an up-to-date emergency plan, contact or notification list, and inventory of resources that are readily available for implementation. The mayors also expect the emergency plan to identify the spokesperson and the person responsible for public relations. One mayor added that he expects the emergency manager to pre-train community members who may be called upon to assist the municipality.

The CAOs included in the emergency manager's role writing the municipality's emergency plan and coordinating the plan with departments and organizations. The CAOs expect the emergency manager to ensure that the plans are satisfactory for the various types of potential emergencies and that the resources are in place to implement and exercise the plan. This includes identifying risks and then looking at how the municipality can mitigate those risks. Additionally, the CAOs expect emergency managers to make sure that all of the participants within a municipality are assisted in making their plans.

The emergency managers defined their role as to create and maintain an emergency plan based upon the hazards and risks and the resources of the municipality, to educate the public on personal preparedness, to establish a response strategy, and to assist the municipalities within their two-tier structure. Additionally, they feel responsible to provide the council with an annual program report and ensure that the council and the CAO are apprised of project initiatives and status. The emergency managers perceived their role as strategic and/or operational at the EOC but not at an incident site as emergency responders.

Similarities and Contrasting Views of the Emergency Manager's Role

The mayors, CAOs, and emergency managers concurred that the role of an emergency manager is to ensure annual municipal compliance with Ontario Regulation 380/04. Four out of nine emergency managers added that it is also their responsibility, as an expectation of the council, to reach a higher program level (comprehensive) and develop mitigation strategies.

All three groups reported that the emergency manager's role is to educate mayors, their alternates, key stakeholders, staff, and other emergency managers

within their two-tier structure. Emergency managers must also ensure that there are sufficient mock disaster exercises to teach officials their roles in an emergency, test the emergency control group's procedures, and determine how the emergency plan can be enhanced. According to the mayors, the exercise results should be reported to the council.

Four of the nine mayors want their emergency manager to "take charge and control" of an emergency site as the lead while others listen to them and follow their orders. The mayors want to be informed of the incident from the scene and authorize the necessary resources, which enables the emergency manager to control the situation and deploy the emergency services. One mayor perceived the emergency manager as the person in charge of managing the emergency control group. The CAOs, however, commented that the emergency manager has the skills to be involved in the management of the emergency and that this would entail his or her involvement as a member of or support for the emergency control group and/or emergency site management team and ensure the smooth running of the EOC. Other management duties include advising the CAO of the issues, what is happening, what action the municipality has taken so far, and what recommendations should be considered, while keeping the mayor and/or members of the council informed. In coordinating the response with other agencies, emergency managers would calmly manage the execution of the emergency response plan.

Additionally, CAOs viewed the emergency manager as an advisor to emergency management teams, support services, the emergency control group, and the province. The emergency managers' opinion, which is similar to that of the CAOs, is that in their role they are the resident expert, advisor, liaison, response coordinator, problem solver, and "go-to" person. The emergency managers recognized their ability to respond onsite to incidents, but noted that they would be primarily at the EOC.

Six of the nine mayors and three of the nine CAOs perceived the emergency manager's role as including activating the emergency control group and identifying the resources that might be needed during an emergency response. In many cases, they also equated the preparation of their emergency plan with the totality of the emergency management program. All three groups indicated that it is the emergency manager's role to set up or to ensure the set-up of the EOC when an emergency occurs.

The mayors and CAOs viewed the emergency manager in a leadership role—as the person who makes recommendations to them. The CAOs and the emergency managers themselves saw the need for them to be good departmental managers and to encourage, facilitate, and create enthusiasm in others while networking with and generating cooperation from all stakeholders. The mayors expect the emergency manager to cooperate and communicate between

themselves and upper- and lower-tier municipalities to help each other if necessary. This role includes the development of partnerships between municipalities and cross-border communities, and industry. Similarly, the CAOs envisioned a thorough but simple, coordinated, and well-thought-out approach to managing emergencies in cooperation with the community and its partners. Likewise, the emergency managers reported that their councils want them to provide assistance when required to the lower-tier municipalities and to support their programs so that they are able to respond to emergencies in an integrated way.

The mayors expect their emergency management programs to address how the municipality and the affected business community will recover from a disaster. Similarly, one CAO stated that a prime objective of his program is to keep the business sector operating in the best way that it can during a crisis, thus preventing the community from collapsing. A couple of emergency managers acknowledged their responsibility for the municipality's business continuity management program, but not specifically for assistance to local businesses. Although one emergency manager stated that her council has never identified its expectations of the position, others indicated that their council expects them to create a disaster-resilient community.

Recent Evolution of Role

All but one of the mayors perceived the emergency manager's role as having evolved over the last five years, and they described this evolution in many ways. One mayor reported that the fire chief (who is also the emergency manager) is now responding to the EOC instead of the emergency site, that program activities have expanded beyond response to include prevention, and that more exercises have been conducted. One mayor recognized that, as the role grows, the municipality must be prepared for occurrences that were never contemplated in the past and that the focus of the program has shifted from preparing the plan to dealing with residents and businesses. Seven of the nine CAOs reported that the emergency manager's role has evolved simply by virtue of the creation of the position to ensure that the municipalities can meet the regulations that became effective in 2004. One CAO observed that the position has evolved from part-time to full-time and has greater expectations. Individual CAOs described the evolution of the emergency manager's role as including greater risk assessment rigor through the application of science, the facilitation of others' plans, advocacy for effective emergency management coordination with senior levels of government, and an elevated public profile of the position as a result of September 11, 2001. Seven of the nine emergency managers reported that their enhanced roles, their status as full-time employees, and their elevated titles and

remunerations resulted from the regulations. They described the shift from emergency planning to emergency management and the growth in scope and responsibilities that now includes training, supervision of staff, budgeting, decision making, and strategic planning. One reported that the role has evolved since it was created eight years ago to include cross-border activities. Another stated that the job was not full-time four years ago and that it has since moved from department to department. Two emergency managers did not perceive the role as having evolved; they had been in the newly created position for less than two years, and one stated that less time is allocated to the role now because just a few tasks are conducted annually to meet the essential-level requirements.

Emergency Management Program Expectations

The mayors and CAOs emphasized that emergency managers should have a good communications strategy in place to inform the public who are at risk during an emergency to ensure that they and their property are properly protected. The CAOs noted that the emergency management program must address taking care of the vulnerable population. The emergency managers concurred with the mayors and CAOs that their programs should focus on developing evacuation plans and creating disaster-resilient communities.

   The mayors expect their programs to have a public education component that includes teaching citizens about personal preparedness and the need for a three-day emergency supply kit. The mayors and emergency managers want the public to be advised of potential hazards and risks in their community prior to an event.

Staffing Emergency Management Programs

Although emergency managers are full-time employees, fewer than half are actually in emergency management–only dedicated positions and frequently have additional responsibility for business continuity management and 9-1-1 administration. This position is most often shared with fire chiefs and others such as planners, CAOs, and corporate security administrators. The time allocated to the position ranges greatly, from 10 minutes to two-and-a half days per week, with an average of one day a week. In small municipalities the position is part-time only because they lack funding and are able to depend on the upper tier municipalities for resources and expertise.

   If a municipality had an opportunity to reengineer its emergency management program, the mayors reported that they would not make changes, whereas four of the nine CAOs stated that it was too early to consider restructuring a new program. Three of the nine CAOs and five of the nine

emergency managers noted that a reengineered program would require more funding and staff dedicated to the position. One CAO discussed the need for greater provincial involvement beyond setting regulations and legislation. The emergency managers offered the most feedback on how an emergency management program could be reengineered, including separating emergency management and business continuity programs, adding additional staff, and moving the program to the CAO's office to elevate its profile and obtain greater executive buy-in.

Effective Strategies

The mayors, CAOs, and emergency managers all perceived the elected officials, staff, organizations, and public as significantly complacent with regard to taking emergency management seriously. One mayor reported that getting mayors to pay attention is difficult. Two thirds of the interviewees suggested that obtaining funding and justifying program enhancements for staffing and training exercises are major challenges, especially because the program competes with more traditional core responsibilities that are now under economic pressure. All saw that educating and persuading the council to spend money on preparedness without a prior emergency is very difficult. Four of the mayors and eight of the CAOs charged that this service shows its value only when there is a problem and that it is hard to spend money on events that they hope will never happen when they have to spend money on necessities. The mayors and CAOs repeatedly suggested that keeping the council informed on program initiatives and on what they are doing, how they are doing it, and how well they are doing it will enhance the emergency manager's role and subsequent funding.

The mayors and CAOs saw training staff, having sufficient time to get emergency control groups members together, and dealing with local two-tier governance issues as challenges that emergency managers face today. The mayors reported other challenges such as trying to motivate officials at training exercises, assessing the longer-term impacts of emergencies, communicating effectively with the public during an emergency, working with the myriad of groups, managing community growth, having more emergency managers committed, being prepared to respond to any type of emergency, dealing with vulnerable populations (particularly seniors), encouraging the community to work together, making decisions, being concerned about liability, answering calls for unknown risks, and ensuring that small municipalities comply with the regulations. One CAO complained that emergency managers always have to think about the kinds of things that require plans, which puts major demands on staff in terms of their ability and knowledge in preparing and writing these plans.

Effective strategies that emergency managers employ to obtain support and resources from their councils and CAOs include making regular and annual reports to the council, CAO, and senior management; inviting the CAO and elected officials to emergency management program committee meetings; hosting joint tier meetings; including elected officials on project teams; hosting community exercises; publicizing community preparedness events and utilizing the media to promote program achievements; and launching staff disaster readiness campaigns. Two of the emergency managers reported that they do not see the need to have effective strategies in order to obtain executive-level program support from elected and senior officials.

Skills and Competencies

The three groups suggested that the common skills that emergency managers require include highly organized, effective communication; excellent writing; diplomacy and political acuity; organizational awareness; interpersonal competence (relationship building, calmness); and leadership. The common key competencies include experience, expertise, and the ability to take command and control of a situation. The mayors stressed that emergency managers should be knowledgeable about the community, have some basic expertise and competence, stay on the leading edge of knowledge of various kinds of emergencies, and understand the consequences of each of those events for municipalities and what they must do to prepare for those eventualities. The CAOs and emergency managers agreed that the necessary skills should also include a basic knowledge of local government, a thorough comprehension of emergency management, the ability to quickly assess situations, knowledge of project management, strategic thinking, good judgment, and the ability to be "thick skinned." The mayors and emergency managers concurred that public speaking, presentation skills, resource management, self-confidence, and computer skills are also essential. Other competencies that the mayors identified with less frequency are the ability to plan and determine community risks, a high level of energy, the ability to be a self-starter, and intelligence. One rural mayor, as an illustration of the large diversity of expected skills, was very sensitive to the specificity of the skills of his emergency manager, which include trades such as hunting, fishing, and farming. Three of the nine CAOs suggested intuition skills, common sense, and the ability to multitask; and the emergency managers added research, analytical, and problem-solving skills; the ability to sell the program to the council; and physically fitness to deal with stressful work.

The mayors and CAOs considered the emergency manager's job as a senior-level position, such as at the director's level; however, the emergency managers viewed their job as at a middle-management level, with, preferably, an

emergency services background. Why is this the case? It seems that mayors and CAOs have higher expectations. Two mayors and three CAOs perceived that emergency managers acquire their knowledge base from university and college courses in emergency management, but five emergency managers affirmed that their knowledge base comes from formal education, but not specifically in emergency management. The mayors, CAOs, and emergency managers all suggested that the planning profession has contributed to the emergency manager's knowledge base, as well as training courses, experience, and a background in emergency (fire or military) services. The CAOs and emergency managers reported that the knowledge base results from networking with peers, attending conferences and seminars, taking provincial EMO training courses and attending their EMO sector meetings, and reading the literature. The emergency managers added that hospitals and the police service contribute to their knowledge, whereas the mayors suggested that public works has also contributed.

Professional Development

The emergency managers reported that their professional development comes from attending conferences, primarily the annual World Conference on Disaster Management in Toronto, Ontario, and by participating in workshops hosted by the Ontario Association of Emergency Managers (OAEM). Two of the emergency managers receive their professional development at EMO's conferences, sector meetings, and courses. Other professional development venues for conferences and workshops that the participants infrequently mentioned included the Federated Press, the Conference Board of Canada, the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM), the Association of Public-safety Communications Officials, the National Emergency Number Association, and the Disaster Recovery Information Exchange. Two of the emergency managers received their professional development from university courses. One CAO suggested that emergency managers must take ongoing education, attend conferences, meet with peers, and stay up to date on relevant emergency management issues. McEntire (2007) concurred:

> As comparative research expands in the future, emergency managers should stay on top of the literature. Furthermore, emergency managers should stay in tune with current disasters around the world and consider the implications of those events for their own jurisdictions. Emergency managers should therefore be continuous students, seeking to apply best practices for the benefit of the community in which they reside. (p. 179)

Current Educational and Certification Requirements

An emergency manager's current postsecondary educational requirements vary across the municipalities included in this study from university degree to college diploma to none to unknown. Participants from two municipalities stated that the position has a professional certification requirement, over half thought that there was no requirement, and the remainder did not know. One mayor argued that it would make sense for emergency managers to have certification to demonstrate that they are well qualified. One CAO remarked that his municipality normally requires its people to be certified and that if the emergency manager is not, the municipality would encourage and pay for his or her certification. One CAO believed that EMO offers different certification levels. One emergency manager considered a college certificate in emergency management as professional certification, a second thought that the CEMC council appointment is the same as the certified emergency manager (CEM®) professional designation, a third reported that his municipality is moving in the direction of requiring certification, a fourth's municipality prefers business continuity certification, and a fifth emergency manager acknowledged that he was not sure whether there was a requirement for the designation, but that it would make sense to have it.

Future Emergency Managers

About half of the mayors and CAOs perceived the emergency manager's role as essentially the same in the future as it is today and suggested that changes would be likely only if the legislation changed. The CAOs and emergency managers perceived more emphasis on municipal emergency management because of legislative requirements and liability. Four of the nine CAOs advised that it is too soon to tell how the role will evolve because the positions were newly created; however, three CAOs envisioned the role expanding and becoming more formalized. Two of the mayors and emergency managers perceived the role as evolving as the types of disasters change. Two of the CAOs and many emergency managers perceived the creation of future full-time positions with job duties that involve mitigation and comprehensive planning. This is possible in that the majority of the mayors and emergency managers as well as all of the CAOs indicated that their emergency managers were involved in their municipality's strategic plan. Three emergency managers also believed that their role would become more professionalized and important to policy makers. Overall, there was little commonality among the mayors, CAOs, and emergency managers regarding how they envisioned the role of the emergency manager evolving. The mayors' perceptions of future requirements included additional education, training courses, exercises, and attendance at EMO sessions; increased involvement of industry; an

expanded mission; a more comprehensive, higher profile; further public education; and more widely used technology. One mayor observed that the state of the economy will determine whether the role expands. The CAOs' perceptions included increased regulations and thus more emphasis on the role from higher levels of government, relocation of the position from fire to the CAOs office (with direct access to the CAO), and an expanded role that includes a comprehensive level of activities as per the provincial program standards. The emergency managers saw themselves becoming key players in business continuity management, the position becoming more strategic and at a management level, the elimination of fire chiefs as emergency managers, and the work continuing to be led by the upper-tier municipalities.   Although most of the mayors, CAOs, and emergency managers suggested that emergency management will become a full-fledged profession, one or two from each group perceived professional emergency managers as essential in only large municipalities and not applicable to small ones. The emergency managers saw their role and job duties improving if small municipalities within a county or region amalgamate their programs and hire one professional. One emergency manager recommended that, although EMO is trying to push emergency management in small communities, municipalities are more apt to listen to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO); however, AMO has not yet bought into the role of emergency managers. The AMO conference must include sessions on emergency management and the role of municipalities.

Future Educational and Certification Requirements

All but one of the mayors and all of the CAOs ranked very highly the importance of the need for future emergency managers to have professional certification and a degree and/or college diploma in emergency management. One mayor expressed his concern about the possibility that certification would be hugely detrimental to small municipalities; however, another mayor commented that this discipline requires a designation. One CAO remarked that the "good old-boy days" are long gone and that emergency management professionals in 10 years will be more educated and sophisticated. Another CAO observed that certification develops a standard to which people aspire and gives credibility to the position. Furthermore, "The emergency services structure operates on the basis of command and stripe": When an emergency manager attempts to coordinate, "unless you have some stripe, it is often difficult to acquire the necessary respect." He added that certification would bring a standard to the position that would be earned, it would demonstrate the ethics and skills required to actually function in that role to avoid confusion and ambiguity, and it would bring a high level of importance to the profile. The emergency managers ranked the importance of the need for their

future colleagues to have professional certification and a degree and/or college diploma in emergency management as moderate to high. McEntire (2007) reported that,

> In spite of the current educational opportunities, professionalization is still desperately needed among the rank and file of those working in the field. Future emergency managers must also possess expanded knowledge of different academic disciplines, distinct practical functional areas, and key partners in public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Today's complex and dynamic disasters require knowledgeable professionals who understand effective management principles and are able to make good decisions based on unique disaster contexts. (p. 177)

Other Findings

The expectations of five of the nine emergency managers and four of the nine CAOs are that the province will need to take emergency management more seriously, examine how municipalities will be able to implement the comprehensive-level program, improve their understanding of what local emergency managers do, improve their training program, improve their internal communication, and develop appropriate courses to train municipal staff and CEMCs, especially in smaller jurisdictions.

Study Conclusions

A total of 12 conclusions emerged from the findings: 6 in regard to the emergency manager's role, 4 pertaining to the emergency manager's skills and competencies, and 2 aimed at emergency managers of the future.

Emergency Manager's Role

Six conclusions emerged from the findings with regard to the emergency manager's role specifically: (1) an emergency manager as an emergency responder, (2) the confusion between appointments and designations, (3) recent role evolution, (4) the integration of strategic planning and emergency management, (5) the complexity of the role, and (6) overcoming apathy and complacency.

Conclusion 1: Emergency Manager as Emergency Responder

When Ontario Regulation 380/04 came into force in 2004, many municipalities appointed their fire chief as the CEMC, which reinforced the notion that emergency managers are first responders: "A basic assumption still prevalent is that emergency management is primarily a 'response' function and a concern only for first responders" (Schneider, 2003, p. 4). Mayors and CAOs viewed fire chiefs as the people who could "take charge" and therefore became a "good fit" because of their emergency response expertise. Britton (1999) warned that "many practitioners still regard their business as only preparing for and responding to crisis events. Moreover, many politicians, other policy- and decision-makers, and the public-at-large still consider that response is the emergency manager's only business-at-hand" (p. 229). The CAO, and perhaps other municipal officials to a lesser extent, defines the emergency manager's role and job responsibilities.

Conclusion 2: CEMC-CEM Confusion

In 1993 the IAEM began awarding the CEM® professional designation, which some emergency managers in Ontario, across Canada, and around the world have earned. In 2004 Ontario Regulation 380/04 came into effect, which required municipalities to appoint, by bylaw, an employee as the CEMC. However, all three groups (to varying degrees) have misunderstood this appointment as the province's awarding of a professional designation to emergency managers through EMO. Second, the similarity of the CEMC and CEM® acronyms has increased the misunderstanding.

Conclusion 3: Recent Role Evolution

Municipal emergency management programs in Ontario are driven by provincial legislation and regulation because, generally, only the activities stipulated in the regulations are undertaken. According to Petak (1985), "Public administration, as a discipline, has generally neglected to consider emergency management within the mainstream of its activities" (p. 3). The three groups consistently suggested that the emergency manager's role and the reporting structure over the last five years have evolved from the creation of both part-time and full-time positions and that the position has moved from the emergency services department to the CAO's office. "Others may report to a city manager or even the mayor directly, and movement toward this trend is gaining momentum" (McEntire, 2007, p. 170). Municipalities have created many emergency manager positions since 2004, which enables a dedicated employee to undertake essential-level tasks to ensure compliance with the regulations. Representatives of the municipalities reported

that emergency managers in a shared-function position dedicate no more than 20% of their time (or up to one day per week) to emergency management.

The mayors and CAOs were fairly content with their current program structures, and a third of them saw no large future changes in the emergency manager's role and the program structure. However, the emergency managers were more likely to suggest possible future changes such as more full-time dedicated emergency managers and a change in reporting structure.

Although all three groups reported that their activities generally did not exceed the requirements of the essential-level program, five of the nine CAOs felt that the emergency manager position has not existed in the organization long enough to evaluate whether it is in the right spot and at the right level and has adequate resource allocation. The emergency managers and CAOs concurred that a future increase in program staff is likely, because "in the future emergency managers will face changes and advances in the workplace and in the world at large that we cannot even guess at today" (Darlington, 2000, p. 11). Only the emergency managers perceived themselves becoming involved in business continuity management and recovery and mitigation activities becoming part of the role. "The new emergency management may well be said to have begun with a focus on hazard mitigation" (Schneider, 2003, p. 9).

Conclusion 4: Integration of Strategic Management

For the role of emergency managers to evolve beyond what it is today, their duties need to expand to include the "broader task of developing sustainable communities" (Schneider, 2003, p. 6). In achieving this, emergency managers will demand, at minimum, participation in their municipality's strategic planning process. Schneider viewed:

> What is lacking is a dynamic model for transforming a once limited function into a contemporary public management role connected to the whole of community life. Any effort to enhance the professionalism of emergency managers will be frustrated if it is not connected to a strategic orientation that broadens the scope and impact of the profession. (p. 5)

All of the CAOs reported that their emergency managers were involved in the municipality's strategic planning process. The mayors, however, split their responses, and a three did not see any linkage of the strategic planning process to the emergency manager's role. Four CAOs and two mayors concurred that the involvement of the emergency manager position in the municipality's strategic plan happened as a result of their main function as fire chief. Emergency

managers from the small municipalities reported that their organizations do not have a strategic plan. All but one of the emergency managers from medium- and large-sized municipalities reported being involved in the strategic planning process in some capacity. The emergency manager who was not involved in strategic planning explained that it is because the non–senior management position is too low in the organizational hierarchy. Schneider (2003) stated that:

> Without a new framework and a new strategic approach that connects emergency management to the broader issues and community concerns noted above, it will remain in a position of low salience, low stakeholder support, scarce resources, institutional instability, and limited or constrained effectiveness. (p. 6)

Conclusion 5: Role Complexity

Although the mayors and CAOs acknowledged the complexity of the types of emergencies that emergency managers have to plan for and the difficulty in doing this, they did not recognize the complexity from a community-sustainability perspective, but rather from a plan-preparation perspective. According to Petak (1985), "Technical and administrative capacities of local governments are limited in dealing with the complexity of the problems" (p. 5). Also, municipalities are still utilizing the old traditional approach to emergency management by preparing reactive response plans for specific disaster threats rather than planning holistically toward community resiliency (Schneider, 2003). The mayors and CAOs also recognized the challenge of coordinating program activities with a broad range of organizations. Petak explained that "intergovernmental and intraorganizational complexity often leads to lack of coordinated response, distrust, and conflict" (p. 5). One CAO reported that he and his fellow CAOs could assist emergency managers in building top-down strategic relations with stakeholders, and this support is critical in aiding the emergency manager in fulfilling the municipality's mission.

Conclusion 6: Overcoming Apathy and Complacency

All three groups recognized the apathy and complacency of elected officials, senior management and staff, and the public towards emergency management: "Apathy toward disaster preparedness pervades governmental bodies as well as the public at large" (Auf der Heide, 1989, Chapter 2: Reasons for Apathy section, ¶ 1). The mayors, CAOs, and emergency managers concurred that getting the mayor's attention and the council's support for adequate resources (hiring staff and conducting training and exercises) is the main challenge that emergency

managers face today. Drabek (1986; as cited in Auf der Heide, 1989) cautioned that "even when governmental bodies have adopted goals for disaster preparedness, the resources necessary to accomplish the goals have not always been made available" (Chapter 2: Governmental Apathy section, ¶ 1). Council members do not see the value in spending money on preparedness and other aspects of emergency management for events that they have never experienced (Tarrant, 2006). The CAOs reported that it is hard for municipalities to allocate money to the emergency management program if they have not yet had an emergency and emergency management is competing for funding with other departments that have had longstanding core responsibilities that are under financial pressure. "In times of economic restraints, programs whose benefits cannot clearly be demonstrated get short shrift on the fist of budgetary priorities" (Auf der Heide, 1989, Chapter 2: Difficulty Substantiating Benefits of Preparedness section, ¶ 1). Actual emergencies heighten the emergency manager's access to much-needed program resources, as well as determine in which activities they will engage. More specifically, disasters will advance an emergency management agenda, alter the level of complacency, and raise the expectations of the emergency manager's role.

The mayors and CAOs have been encouraging emergency managers to educate themselves and to keep their councils informed of their initiatives to increase the probability of acquiring funding. As one emergency manager suggested, AMO can be most instrumental in educating officials. Most of the emergency managers perceived that CAOs understand their role fairly well, but they believed that mayors understand it only moderately, which means that the emergency managers must have good "salesmanship" skills. McEntire (2007) emphasized that "every local government organization has some relation to disasters and emergency management operations. Emergency managers must therefore educate city leaders about disasters, and involve them as much as is possible in prevention and preparedness processes" (p. 173). Ironically, two emergency managers reported not having any effective strategies to increase their visibility and credibility with their council and CAO, nor did they believe that they needed any. In spite of the current tactics that emergency managers use to educate and keep councils and CAOs informed, these strategies are possibly not highly effective in persuading officials to support their budgetary requests for more staffing and resources. As the emergency managers themselves would agree, "Emergency managers have traditionally been underfunded and overworked in most jurisdictions" (p. 178).

Skills and Competencies

Three conclusions emerged from the study findings with regard to the emergency managers' skills and competencies specifically: (1) skills and management level, (2) current education and certification requirements, and (3) future education and certification requirements.

Conclusion 1: Skills and Management Level

The three groups fairly consistently identified the skills and key competencies. In any case, Petak (1985) stressed:

> The public administrator, as emergency manager, must have the conceptual skill to understand (1) the total system, (2) the uses to which the products of the efforts of various professionals will be put, (3) the potential linkages between the activities of various professional specialists, and (4) the specifications for output formats and language which are compatible with the needs and understanding of others within the total system. (p. 6)

The mayors and CAOs perceived the emergency manager in a senior role, whereas the emergency managers saw the position as middle management. There is clearly a difference in the perceptions of where the emergency manager fits into a municipality's management hierarchical structure. Emergency managers need to know that their position may well evolve into a senior management position, and therefore it is critical for them to obtain the necessary conceptual, leadership, and management skills.

Conclusion 2: Current Education and Certification Requirements

Although the majority of the mayors do not know the education and certification requirements of the emergency manager position, they specifically stated that they want and expect their emergency manager to be well qualified and certified. The CAOs are more familiar with the educational requirements of the position rather than the certification requirements, and two thirds of the emergency managers stated that their position has a postsecondary educational requirement, but no certification. Of the three groups, 41% suggested a postsecondary requirement, 22% suggested none, and 37% did not know. Regarding certification, only 7% indicated that there is a requirement, whereas 52% said none, and 41% did not know. Overall, all three groups are consistently poorly informed on the requirements of the emergency manager's position.

Conclusion 3: Future Education and Certification Requirements

As the profession emerges and the complexities of managing disasters escalate, education has become more readily available to emergency managers. "Increasingly, it would seem, advanced educational training at the undergraduate and graduate level is required for all emergency managers" (Schneider, 2003, p. 14). Regarding future emergency managers' education and professional certification, the mayors and CAOs perceived them as highly necessary in both cases, and they ranked education at 7.9 and 8.6, respectively, out of 10; and certification 7.3 (with 78% scoring an 8 or higher) and 8.3 (with all CAOs scoring 7 or higher), respectively, out of 10. The emergency managers rated the importance of education (7.6) and certification (7.2) lower than the mayors and CAOs did. One emergency manager rated the need for certification by using two scores: a high score for large communities and a very low score for small communities. According to McEntire (2007):

> The evolving educational opportunities are also leading to more respect for the position of local emergency manager. According to many job postings, a degree in emergency management is now preferred and is often required. More and more jurisdictions are unwilling to hire individuals without the necessary backgrounds and credentials. (p. 170)

Emergency Managers of the Future

Based upon the study findings, two conclusions emerged specifically regarding future emergency managers: (1) program standards and (2) the emerging profession.

Conclusion 1: Program Standards

Three mayors, two CAOs, and three emergency managers argued that Ontario should have two different standards for emergency management program delivery: one for large and one for small municipalities. Large municipalities would require education and certification and have full-time emergency managers. Small municipalities, however, still abiding by the essential-level program standard, would not require education or certification or have full-time dedicated emergency managers.

The emergency managers contended that mid-sized communities are not able to maintain fire chiefs in a double-hatted position for much longer. Mileti (1999) observed that municipalities have "succumb[ed] to over-confidence based

on successful response to routine emergencies" (p. 217) and therefore allow that fire chiefs to act dually as emergency managers. With the fire chief's emphasis on command and control, the written emergency plan, and response, the emergency managers claimed that it is a challenge to remove fire services from the emergency manager positions. McEntire (2007) reported that:

> Small, rural towns may not have sufficient resources to hire a full-time disaster specialist. If this is the case, the job remains vacant or someone may voluntarily fill this function. At other times, the emergency manager may work on a part-time basis, or the fire chief, police chief, public works director, city manager, or mayor fills this role. (p. 170)

Conclusion 2: Emerging Profession

Overall, the three groups consistently responded affirmatively that emergency management would become a full-fledged profession. Approximately 85% said that it is possible; however, a few thought that it would happen only in large municipalities. "The practice of emergency management is still evolving and growing. It has been at a cross-road for several years and will continue to be for several more" (Britton, 1999, p. 227). Indeed, the emergency management profession continues to evolve towards full stature.

Study Recommendations

In understanding the mayors', CAOs', and emergency managers' perceptions of the emergency manager's role today and in the future and the challenges that they face in fulfilling their role, three conclusions have been drawn. First, elected and appointed officials and the public are generally complacent and apathetic about emergency management. This had led to communities and the public-at-large not being adequately prepared and emergency managers not being able to get enough support and resources to fully implement their programs. Second, most CAOs believe that their fire chiefs, who duly act as emergency managers, can implement emergency management programs most effectively, because the CAOs consider emergency events extensions of routine problems handled in a 'command-and-control' manner. Not all municipalities see the value of hiring emergency managers and/or do not have the financial resources to do so. Third, the mayors and CAOs believe that emergency managers need certification, and they and the emergency managers believe that education is required in the future as the expectations of the role grow. Currently, all three groups are confused about the difference between emergency management professional certification and the

CEMC municipal bylaw appointment. Clearly, emergency managers perceive themselves as middle managers who do not require certification today; however, their bosses see them differently. Based upon these conclusions, I have developed a number of recommendations for consideration.

Recommendation 1

AMO, with the assistance of emergency managers, should educate the councils, mayors, CAOs, and senior municipal staff on emergency management to overcome apathy and move towards building disaster-resilient communities.

The emergency managers' role and the activities of their programs will continue to evolve towards building disaster-resilient communities as their councils, mayors, CAOs, and senior municipal staff becomes educated in emergency management, which will thus overcome the current apathy and complacency. "Contributing to governmental apathy is the fact that, in spite of the increasing threat of disasters, they are still improbable events" (Auf der Heide, 1989, Chapter 2, Events section, ¶ 1). Because of their influence and provincewide network, I recommend that, ideally, AMO, in support to emergency managers, take on a central task to educate elected officials in Ontario on emergency management, the creation of disaster-resilient communities, and the role of the emergency manager. AMO has the political clout to make this happen, and emergency managers would truly benefit from their leverage and credibility. Municipalities' reluctance today to spend money on events that have not occurred has resulted in poorly funded emergency management programs, including low staffing levels. Elected and administrative officials need to be informed about local hazards and risks, comprehensive-level program initiatives, local program resource requirements, the role of emergency managers, and how the municipality can build disaster-resilient communities.

As the literature suggested and as the mayors and CAOs recognized, it is critical that emergency managers use effective strategies to increase their credibility and visibility for their mayors and CAOs to support and facilitate them. The credibility and visibility can be achieved through joint educational forums with AMO, which will ideally lead towards acquiring more staff. "Politicians and communities should take advantage of the current context to promote their programs and departments. Increased responsibilities cannot be adequately addressed by a limited number of emergency managers" (McEntire, 2007, p. 178). A few CAOs and emergency managers themselves believe that, wherever possible, municipalities should consider hiring more emergency managers. Drabek (1987) advised that:

The trick is to gain insight into what the people view as potentially threatening and emphasize that in justifying the need for the agency. Since there is a general propensity for most people, including elected officials, to view emergency preparedness as a relatively low priority, identification of new hazards has been found to be a useful tactic. (p. 176)

It is critical that AMO, with the assistance of emergency managers, educate councils, mayors, CAOs, and senior municipal staff on why emergency management is important, what the emergency manager's role is, and what the needs of the program are. McEntire (2007) suggested:

First, there can be little doubt that emergency managers must increase their awareness of the trends pertaining to disaster occurrence and impacts, and accordingly do a better job of sharing such information with decision makers and citizens in their communities. (p. 177)

With the assistance of AMO, emergency managers will be able to increase their credibility and visibility with the council, mayor, CAO, and senior municipal staff, which is instrumental in accessing and influencing other municipal departments for their contributions to a safer community.

Recommendation 2

Emergency managers, in conjunction with their CAOs, should review the emergency management program's mission statement and update the emergency manager's job descriptions to include key skills, hazard-mitigation activities, and other tasks that involve building disaster-resilient communities.

Many emergency manager positions were created after 2004, and some job descriptions now require an update to include strategic roles. Over the last five years the local emergency management's mission has grown. Researchers (Blanchard, 2003; Britton, 1999, 2001; McEntire, 2005, 2006; Moore, 1994; Perry, 1991; Petak, 1985; Schneider, 2003; Waugh & Streib, 2006) and emergency managers have concurred that this trend is evident and that the job descriptions, mission statements, and managerial level of the position need overhauling. The CAOs, emergency managers, and researchers also agreed that the activities that practitioners undertake are directly related to the size of the municipality and to whether the emergency manager is full time or part of an emergency service, as add-on responsibilities.

In concurrence with the literature review, all three groups identified the job attributes that emergency managers require as well-developed personal skills, political astuteness, understanding of the process of government, management skills, communication skills, administrative skills, and coordination skills. According to McEntire (2007), "Despite the divergent organizational situations, emergency managers must use political acumen to promote their program and overcome interpersonal and interorganizational conflict. In other words, the art of the profession is just as important as the science of emergency management" (p. 171). CAOs' and emergency managers' review of the mission statement and job description will bring greater understanding of the role today and better focus the program on building a disaster-resilient community.

Recommendation 3

Emergency managers should obtain support and assistance from their mayors and CAOs to cultivate networks and improve intergovernmental relations, perhaps by initiating newsworthy multi-organizational local strategies.

Researchers have suggested that emergency management has been brought to the political forefront, and they, along with the three groups involved in this study, saw the criticality of emergency managers' ability to build and cultivate strategic alliances and organizational relationships with all emergency management stakeholders. "The need for continued inter-disciplinary and crosscutting partnership building at all levels among scientific and social organisations, government, and the private sector is paramount" (Britton, 2001, p. 51). In conducting this study, I recognize the need for ongoing dialogue and improved relations between municipal emergency managers and EMO leaders to manage the expectations of local officials. To meet the requirement to cultivate and improve intergovernmental relations, emergency managers need assistance, support, encouragement, and resources from their mayors and CAOs to be highly successful.

Recommendation 4

Emergency managers should obtain emergency management education from an academic institution and a professional designation in emergency management.

The three groups were unaware that researchers have advised that emergency managers need skills today in the natural and physical sciences, the social and behavioural sciences, and aspects of engineering and technology that they acquire through education offered at academic institutions. Furthermore,

Darlington (2000) noted that "teaching emergency managers to think critically can enable them to take more control over both their own learning and their own destiny, which translates into empowered communities" (p. 11). Although researchers have stressed that professionals in emergency management today require formal education and that some municipalities are seeking to hire emergency managers with a degree in emergency management, the emergency managers in this study reported that they receive their professional development primarily from Ontario-based conferences and workshops. McEntire (2007) observed that "emergency managers must do a better job of educating themselves and others to counter prevailing apathetic attitudes about disasters" (p. 177). The three groups considered education of prime importance for future emergency managers, and the mayors and CAOs also commented that future emergency managers need a degree and certification as emergency management becomes more professionalized.

The mayors and CAOs want their emergency managers to have certification and be well qualified today, and the literature (Auf der Heide, 1989; Darlington, 2000; Dynes, 1998; Houck et al., 2007; Mileti, 1999; Moore, 1994; Oyola-Yemaiel & Wilson, 2005; Petak, 1985; Waugh, 2005; Wilson, 2001) showed that emergency managers are seeking membership, certification, and accreditation and are engaging in the development of a body of knowledge for the profession. Yet none of the emergency managers interviewed had a professional designation in emergency management. Additionally, an awareness session for mayors, CAOs, and emergency managers is needed not only to advise practitioners that certification is available, but also to eliminate the confusion between the CEM® professional designation and the CEMC municipal bylaw appointment. Emergency managers are encouraged to seek certification and a professional designation in emergency management that will improve their own credibility as well as elevate the profession.

Recommendation 5

Emergency managers should be offered a comprehensive-level training program that will teach them how to promote hazard mitigation and sustainable development and create disaster-resilient communities.

Several emergency managers and CAOs envision that their municipality will begin and/or continue to undertake comprehensive-level activities. Researchers (Blanchard, 2001; Britton, 1999, 2001; Haddow & Bullock, 2005; McEntire, 2006; Mileti, 1999; Schneider, 2003; Waugh, 2005) contended that municipalities are moving towards a comprehensive community process that focuses on hazard mitigation, sustainable development, and resiliency strategies

and that the next generation of emergency managers will influence the creation of safe communities by promoting disaster resiliency and sustainable development. Although the comprehensive-level program is not regulated in Ontario, municipalities will find it challenging to move beyond the essential-level program if emergency managers do not have specific training.

Recommendation 6

Emergency managers should inspire other municipal departments and local organizations to contribute to the optimization of community resiliency.

In concurrence with the literature, researchers (Auf der Heide, 1989; Drabek, 1987, 2007; McEntire, 2007; Mileti, 1999; Schneider, 2003; Selves, 1997; Waugh, 2005), the mayors, CAOs, and emergency managers have witnessed public apathy and complacency towards emergency management. In optimizing community resiliency, emergency managers need official partners (such as other municipal departments and local organizations) as fellow advocates to promote and engage in emergency management. McEntire (2007) explained that:

> The success of emergency managers is largely determined by the extent to which they involve other departments, planning committees, mutual aid parties, and regional networks in pre- and post-disaster activities. In other words, because emergency managers cannot possibly perform every function in emergency management alone, they must attempt to ensure that someone is completing each vital activity pertaining to the reduction and management of disasters. (pp. 172-173)

Public education is one aspect of emergency management to which municipal departments and local organizations can immediately contribute. Current public awareness campaigns need to be overhauled to address local hazards and risks, household readiness, the importance of emergency management at the community level, and the role of emergency managers. The contributions of all municipal departments and local organizations will greatly enhance a community's resiliency and reduce apathy and complacency.

Organizational Implementation

Emergency managers should implement the recommendations in this study to gain a better understanding of the skill sets, education, and certification that they

require today and in the future and, subsequently, to inform them on how their roles are evolving as the core of a maturing profession. The implementation of these recommendations involves primarily the buy-in and commitment of emergency managers, the support of their mayors and CAOs, and the support of organizations and groups such as EMO, AMO, OAEM, and IAEM (Canada).

Recommendation 1 addresses the need for AMO (supported by emergency managers) to educate the elected officials, CAOs, and senior municipal staff, with the desired outcomes of emergency management's being taken seriously and apathy being eliminated. Auf de Heide (1989) warned that one of the reasons for "complacency toward disaster preparedness is the mistaken belief that the disaster problems can be managed merely by an extension of routine emergency measures" (Chapter 2, Overestimation of Capability section, ¶ 1). The education delivered to these officials must convince them that emergency management is necessary and inform them of the requirements of the program, the role of emergency managers, and how they can make their municipality disaster resilient. Britton (1999) cautioned:

> In spite of the CEM [Comprehensive Emergency Management] approach, which includes hazard mitigation and risk reduction, emergency management still draws heavily on the 'can-do' macho-male. This is affecting the pick-up rate of non-response activities such as emergency managers being directly involved in land-use management decisions, undertaking vulnerability assessments and pursuing public risk management programs. (p. 229)

Emergency managers will benefit substantially if the AMO participates in the process of educating elected officials on emergency management—specifically disaster resiliency and the role of emergency managers—because of their tremendous influence and wide-area network capability of reaching out to elected officials across the province.

If AMO and emergency managers are not able to educate decision and policy makers, not only will complacency and apathy prevail, but their role may also not evolve beyond performing preparedness and response activities with the current resources at the essential level. Additionally, the community will not become disaster resilient because it will likely not have the necessary coping capacity to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from a disaster.

Recommendation 2 proposes that emergency managers collaborate with their CAOs to review and update their emergency management program's mission statement as well as their job description. The municipality needs to decide whether it should focus on being a disaster-resilient community and promote sustainable development, and therefore integrate those concepts into its strategic

plan as well as the mission statement of the emergency management office. This will also require a review of emergency managers' key roles and responsibilities as main participants in the process.

If this recommendation is not implemented, the implications are that the municipality's emergency management program will stagnate and not move beyond the essential-level program to achieve best practices. Also, the municipality will miss the opportunity to benefit from incorporating sustainable-development and hazard-mitigation concepts into its strategic plan to enhance a community's disaster resiliency.   Recommendation 3 advocates for mayors' and CAOs' support for emergency managers to cultivate successful networks and improve intergovernmental relations. The literature supported this recommendation:

> One of the major conclusions to be drawn from this exposition is that the emergency manager is only one of many actors interested and involved in disaster issues at the local level, and that increased effort needs to be given to networking and improved intergovernmental relations. (McEntire, 2007, pp. 168-169)

Municipalities will benefit from a collaborative strategy to bring all emergency management stakeholders to a mutual understanding of their respective roles and responsibilities and of how they can assist one another before, during, and following an emergency. Given the multitude of groups and organizations involved in emergency management within a jurisdiction, it is vital that mayors and CAOs support and assist emergency managers to successfully engage all stakeholders. Emergency managers need to develop and implement creative strategies to involve their mayors and CAOs in this process in their community and utilize their own networks and contacts to assist them.

If emergency managers do not have the support and assistance of mayors and CAOs in cultivating networks and improving intergovernmental relations, their efforts, strategic alliances with stakeholders, and programs will not flourish. Also, organizations, whether public, private, or not-for-profit, will not demonstrate the same high level of commitment to emergency management in a community that does not exert local leadership. Ultimately, the municipality's coping capacity and disaster readiness will be marginalized.

Recommendation 4 encourages emergency managers to acquire formal education in emergency management and obtain professional designation. Municipalities should consider hiring emergency managers with such credentials, and emergency managers should consider contacting universities and colleges to find out what education is available and how to enrol, as well as contacting

professional certification organizations such as IAEM to inquire about how to become certified.

Emergency managers who work in a municipality today need to recognize that their mayors and CAOs expect them to have the appropriate credentials and therefore should consider obtaining them if they have not already done so. Future new emergency managers who hope to enter the field may not obtain successful employment beyond an entry-level position without education in emergency management, and the degree is now a vital component in earning a professional designation. If municipalities continue to hire emergency managers who lack education and certification, the professionalization of emergency management will not progress towards a fully mature discipline.

Recommendation 5 suggests that emergency managers would benefit from a comprehensive-level training program that teaches them how to undertake hazard mitigation and sustainable development. From the literature review, it is apparent that emergency managers today and in the future need specialized knowledge, skills, and training to be able to create disaster-resilient communities, and Britton (1999) cautioned that "developing an emergency management curricula is perhaps the most pressing current issue, since the future role of the emergency manager will be defined by this" (p. 230).

If emergency managers do not receive training in the comprehensive-level program in Ontario, their ability to promote, initiate, conduct, and execute hazard mitigation, sustainable development, and disaster-resiliency policies, programs, services, and practices is minimal. Emergency managers must advocate for the training they need to be able to perform tasks at the comprehensive level.

Recommendation 6 proposes launching an ongoing public education program by multiple departments and organizations, ultimately to convince people to plan for emergencies that they think will never happen. Public education programs should involve public participation and must have a mechanism for feedback to the municipality on how ready the public is. Municipalities and community partners must educate the public on the hazards and risks within their communities and teach their citizens what to do before, during, and following an emergency.

Without the presence and assistance of other emergency management stakeholders, emergency managers will not have the resources and sufficient influence to mobilize public education campaigns. In the absence of a public education program, household readiness will continue to be low, and the public's expectation that government will take care of them when a disaster strikes will prevail, along with apathy and complacency, which may ultimately result in greater losses, both human and financial.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine how the emergency manager's role and job duties are evolving today as they, mayors, and CAOs perceive them. Based upon the conclusions that I drew from the perceptions of these three groups, I developed study recommendations that pertain to the AMO and emergency managers' education of officials and the public to overcome apathy. This will lead to more support and assistance to enhance networks and relations as well as for their own emergency management programs. As emergency managers receive training on how to create disaster-resilient communities and acquire education and certification, the mandate of their programs and their job description will evolve and elevate their credibility and visibility.

The implementation of the recommendations depends primarily on the initiative of emergency managers. Although having the support of mayors and CAOs is ideal, emergency managers should also reach out to many organizations such as EMO, AMO, OAEM, and IAEM (Canada) for assistance. The status quo of the emerging profession and the emergency manager's role will prevail with low credibility and visibility if emergency managers do not work towards overcoming apathy and complacency in their communities, enhance strategic networks, improve intergovernmental relations, become more educated, and obtain professional certification.

Several future research implications emerged from this study. Future research could address the successful promotion of local emergency management programs, encouragement of emergency managers to undertake education and certification, the delivery of effective public-education programs, and the willingness of municipalities to create disaster-resilient communities. As next steps, future research could also be undertaken which compares the evolving roles of emergency managers in other provinces and territories, hence drawing conclusions from a national perspective.

Acknowledgements

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