



Simply Halton

Your Halton
Connection
May '07

Emergency Preparedness... Everyone's Responsibility



by Regional Chair Gary Carr

Halton's first priority is always the safety and well-being of our residents. As May 6-12, 2007 marks national Emergency Preparedness Week in Canada, this is an appropriate time to share information about the Region's

role in managing a widespread emergency. Our responsibilities also include providing information on the steps that individuals and families can take to lessen the impact and stress if an emergency was to occur.

The mandate of our Emergency Management Program is not only to ensure the safety of our residents, but also to reduce property damage and economic loss in the event of an emergency. Collaboration is integral to seamlessly manage an emergency and we work year round with emergency responders, health professionals, volunteer groups, businesses, industry and our local municipalities. We develop plans, test our collective response capabilities and work together to train and educate both our emergency response professionals and the public.

Halton Region has responsibility for many of the essential services and infrastructure that the

community relies on such as protection and supply of safe drinking water, treatment of wastewater, maintaining critical access routes and public safety. During the critical first hours of an emergency, Halton responders, local

Contact us to obtain a copy of Halton's Personal Emergency Preparedness Guide.

municipalities and other public-safety partners must deal with the impact of the event, providing aid to those citizens immediately affected while minimizing service interruptions. Therefore, it is particularly important that residents be prepared to assume responsibility for their own care and well-being during the first 72 hours.

Take steps now before a crisis happens. Having a survival kit on hand, knowing how to "Shelter in Place," and talking to your children about what to do during an emergency can greatly reduce the stress on you and your family in the event of a disaster. Halton's Personal Emergency Preparedness Guide is a valuable resource that gives practical information on what you and your family can do to plan for emergencies. Get your copy by contacting us or visit www.halton.ca/beprepared to download the information.

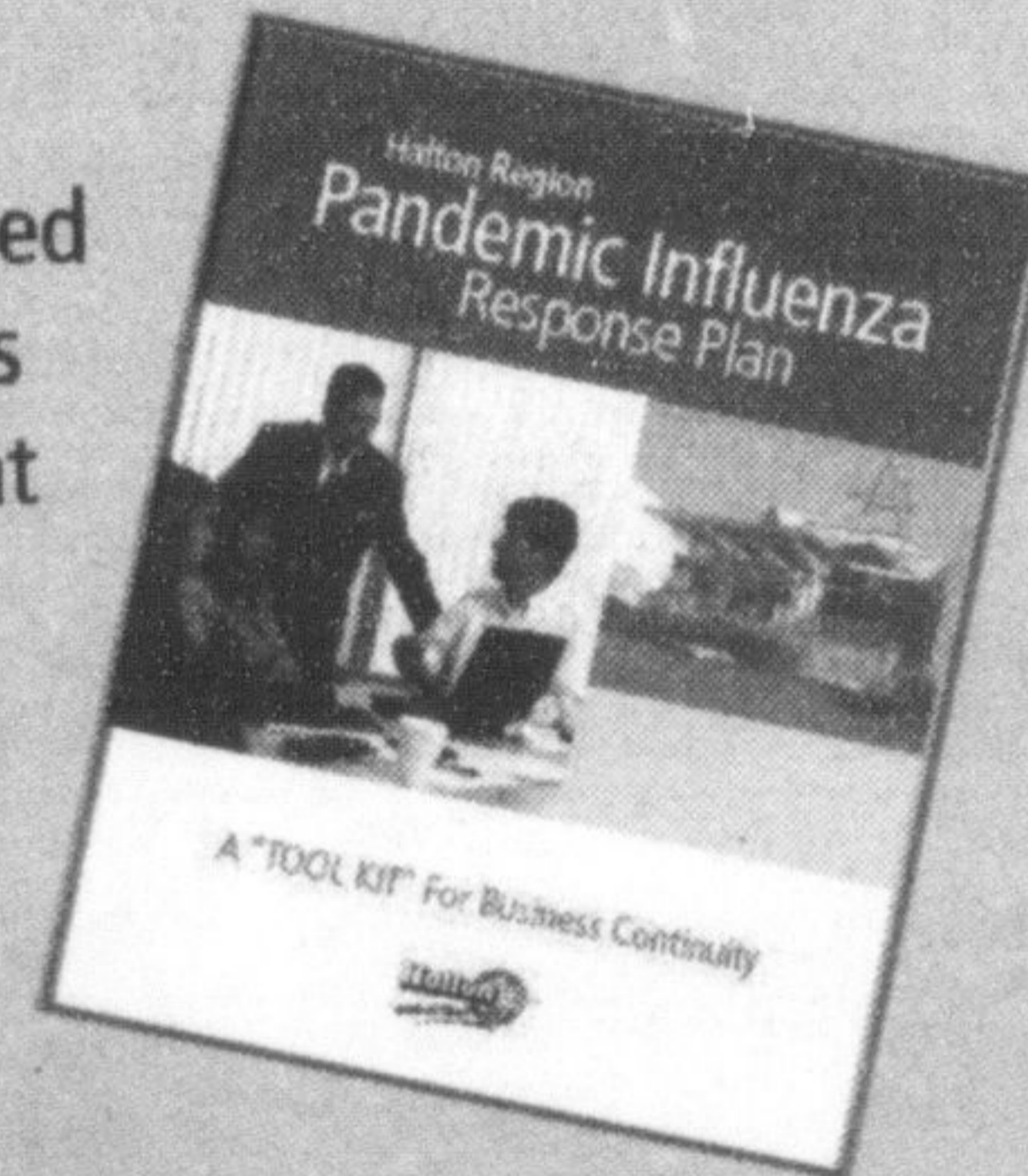
Our Emergency Management program is designed to ensure that Halton is a disaster-resilient community ready to deal with any emergency situation. Each of us has a role to play and I encourage you to do your part in planning for emergencies at home, while Halton Region prepares on behalf of the community.

Are you prepared for pandemic influenza?

Many residents may have heard about pandemic influenza (flu). Pandemic influenza is a worldwide outbreak of influenza, caused by a new, highly contagious strain of influenza virus that spreads around the world.

When pandemic influenza arrives it will present unique planning challenges, as it is difficult to determine the impact that it will have on Regional services, local businesses, infrastructure, hospitals, families and individuals. The timing of a pandemic is also unpredictable. Still, we are using the best projections and information available to work with our partners to minimize the impact of pandemic influenza, in the face of an estimated 25 to 35 per cent of Halton residents, from all age groups, affected by the pandemic virus.

Residents, businesses, organizations, and community groups need to engage in their own planning processes now. One of Halton Region's main roles is to work with businesses and organizations in Halton to assist them with developing their own pandemic plans. To help achieve this goal, Halton has developed the *Halton Region Pandemic Influenza Response Plan: A Tool Kit for Business Continuity*, to help organizations ensure their essential services can continue in the event of a pandemic. For a copy of this resource, or for more information, please visit our website at www.halton.ca/health.



Decontamination during the 2006 Emergency Exercise.

Know what to do during an emergency

Shelter in Place

In the event of a hazardous spill or fire in your community, emergency response officials may instruct you to "Shelter in Place." Shelter in Place is the practice of remaining indoors because of the release of an airborne hazardous material. What you should do:

- If you are outside, move out of the path of smoke or fumes. Never attempt to go through smoke or flames. Seek shelter in a house or automobile and remain inside.
- Close all doors and windows, and shut down air conditioners and fans that bring in outside air. Do not use bathroom or kitchen vents. Do not operate a clothes dryer.
- Set thermostats so air conditioners, furnaces and hot water heaters will not come on.
- Do not use fireplaces. Close all dampers.
- Close all interior doors to compartmentalize your house.
- Cover window openings with plastic held by duct tape. You may want to have pre-cut pieces on hand.
- Monitor your radio, television or the Internet for more information and instructions.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a wet handkerchief or towel if threatened by fumes.
- Evacuate only if you are told to do so by emergency response personnel. In the short term, remaining indoors in a sealed environment is the most effective action you can take.

May Meetings at Halton Region Headquarters

- May 9, 9:30 a.m.** Regional Council Meeting
- May 21** Offices closed for Victoria Day
- May 23, 4:00 p.m.** Planning & Public Works Committee Discussion on EFW/GreenCart to commence at 6:30 p.m.
- May 23, 1:30 p.m.** Administration & Finance Committee
- May 24, 9:30 a.m.** Health & Social Services Committee
- May 30, 9:30 a.m.** Regional Council Meeting

This page has been donated by this newspaper to communicate important information to Halton residents at no cost to taxpayers.

We welcome your feedback. Contact Access Halton at accesshalton@halton.ca
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