



The Conference Board
of Canada

Building Resilience for Future Emergencies. Recent Insights.

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The Conference Board of Canada

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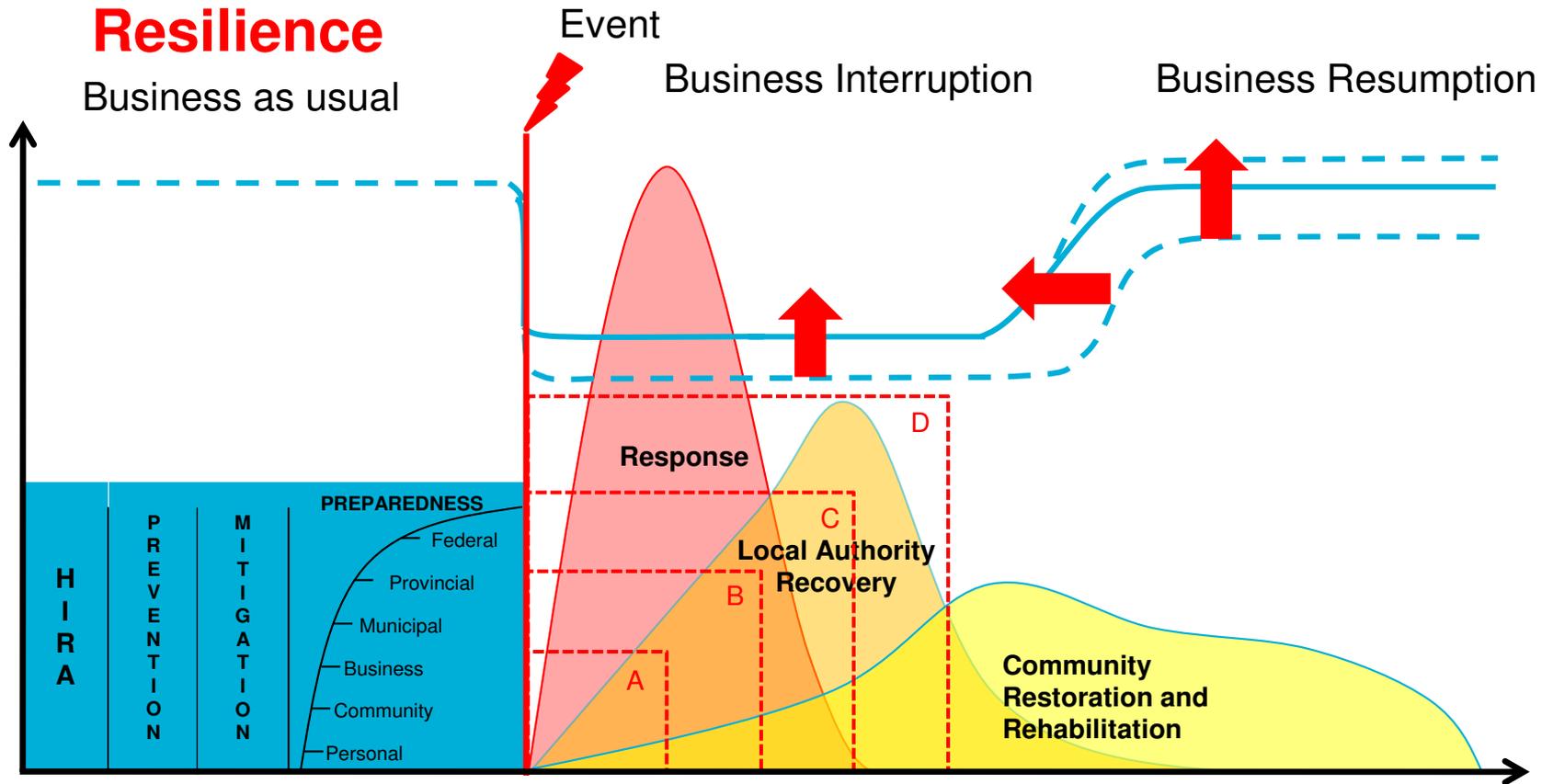
What Is Resilience?

- Broadly defined as “the ability to bounce back”.
- A resilient entity will suffer a reduced disruption during an emergency.
 - Returns to business as usual faster as well.
 - Just as applicable in wildfires as in any other emergency.
- Can be illustrated through the comprehensive emergency management model.



Image Credit: www.theguardian.com

What Is Resilience?



How Do We Build Resilience?

- This question has come up in a number of Conference Board activities.
- We have examined this question through network meetings, webinars, research, study tours and recent major events.
- This is by no means a complete picture but part of the puzzle.
 - Constant learning and evolution is a necessity.



Image courtesy of nokhoog_buchachon at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Insight 1: You Can't Do It Alone.

- *“The world is changing in ways that can have major effects on the emergency management community.” - FEMA*
- We face an increasingly uncertain landscape in emergency management.
 - The number and scale of major emergencies is increasing.
 - Complexity of dealing with emergencies.
- No single organization will have all of the necessary tools and resources to deal with every major emergency.

Insight 1: You Can't Do It Alone.

- A range of partners are available across government.
 - The most common source for assistance.
- The military has played a role in many disasters.
 - During Op LENTUS 16-01 Joint Task Force West shipped 124,700 pounds of freight, transported 367 evacuees and 173 firefighters.
- Need to be aware of potential limitations.



Image Credit: www.mcleans.ca

Insight 1: You Can't Do It Alone.

- The scope and complexity of modern disasters can overwhelm regional and even national capabilities.
 - Firefighters from Mexico, the US and South Africa came to assist.
 - Alberta was able to leverage mutual support arrangements.



Image Credit: Alberta Wildfire Twitter account

- Assistance may need to come from further than you think and you need to be able to scour the globe for help.

Insight 1: You Can't Do It Alone.

- The private sector has played a major role in a number of emergencies.
 - Provided housing and transportation during the Fort McMurray wildfires.
 - Their role was highlighted during Hurricane Sandy, the Boston Marathon Bombings and the 2013 Calgary flood.
- Private sector partnerships can provide additional resources when we need them most.



Image Credit: Westjet

Insight 1: You Can't Do It Alone.

- Partnerships need to be built well before a disaster.
 - Trust and key relationships need to be established.
 - Deeper understanding of capabilities.
 - Exercises are a proven tool for doing this.
- This applies to both public and private sector partnerships.
 - Even public partnerships can fail if they are not built beforehand.
- We need to continue to build and maintain our partnerships across the private and public sector spectrum as well as across our borders.

Insight 2: Build Community Resilience.

- Major emergencies ultimately impact communities.
 - This can happen in a number of ways, both directly and indirectly.
- Resilience needs to start at the community level.
 - Making a community more resilient can limit the impact of a major disaster.
- Numerous campaigns focused on getting people to be better prepared for potential emergencies.
 - How do we foster and strengthen community resilience?

Insight 2: Build Community Resilience.

- At the heart of community resilience is the ability for the community to help itself.
- Numerous stories emerged of community members helping one another.
 - People dumping possessions to make room for evacuees in their vehicles.
 - Similar acts of community in other disasters.
- We need to foster and enable this spirit within communities.



Image Credit: www.communityfoundations.ca

Insight 2: Build Community Resilience.

- Support for the victims of the Fort McMurray wildfires came from all over Canada and all sorts of backgrounds.
 - Community resilience seems to be enhanced by help from beyond municipal and provincial borders.

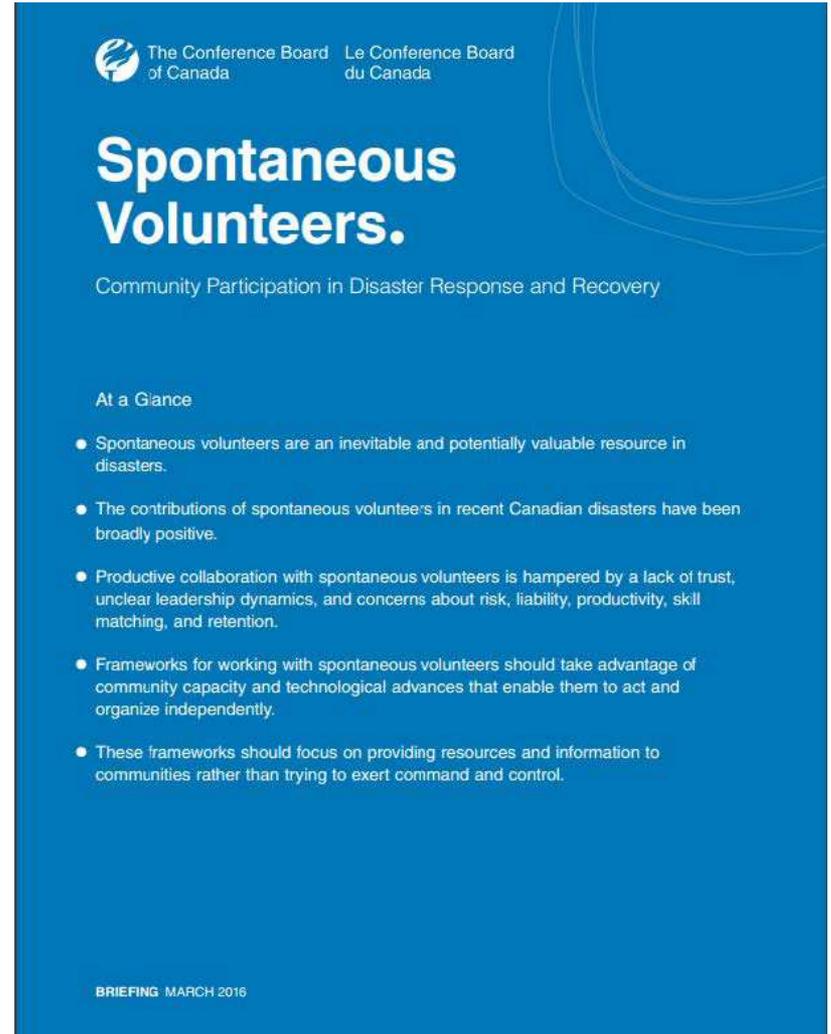


Image Credit: www.ottawacitizen.com

- We may need to re-define our concepts of community resilience beyond geographic boundaries.

Insight 2: Build Community Resilience.

- The actions of community members near and far can be classified as a form of spontaneous volunteerism.
- Spontaneous volunteers can have positive and negative impacts.
 - They are key to community resilience.
 - They will act whether you want them to or not.
 - Need to find ways to work with them.



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Spontaneous Volunteers.

Community Participation in Disaster Response and Recovery

At a Glance

- Spontaneous volunteers are an inevitable and potentially valuable resource in disasters.
- The contributions of spontaneous volunteers in recent Canadian disasters have been broadly positive.
- Productive collaboration with spontaneous volunteers is hampered by a lack of trust, unclear leadership dynamics, and concerns about risk, liability, productivity, skill matching, and retention.
- Frameworks for working with spontaneous volunteers should take advantage of community capacity and technological advances that enable them to act and organize independently.
- These frameworks should focus on providing resources and information to communities rather than trying to exert command and control.

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Insight 2: Build Community Resilience.

- Communities are at the heart of building resilience to disasters.
- We may now need to expand our definition of community beyond simple geographical borders.
 - Some of the factors that enable community resilience may come from outside traditional community borders.
- The ability of communities to build resilience is underpinned by volunteerism.
 - Spontaneous volunteers will act and we need to be able to work with them and potentially integrate them in emergency response.

Insight 3: People Are Your Pillars.

- While tools and technology are important in an emergency, their utility is determined by the people using them.
- The system will fail if you have all the tools without the right people.
- How you select, train and take care of your teams is key to building resilience.
- But people are not always viewed in this way.

Insight 3: People Are Your Pillars.

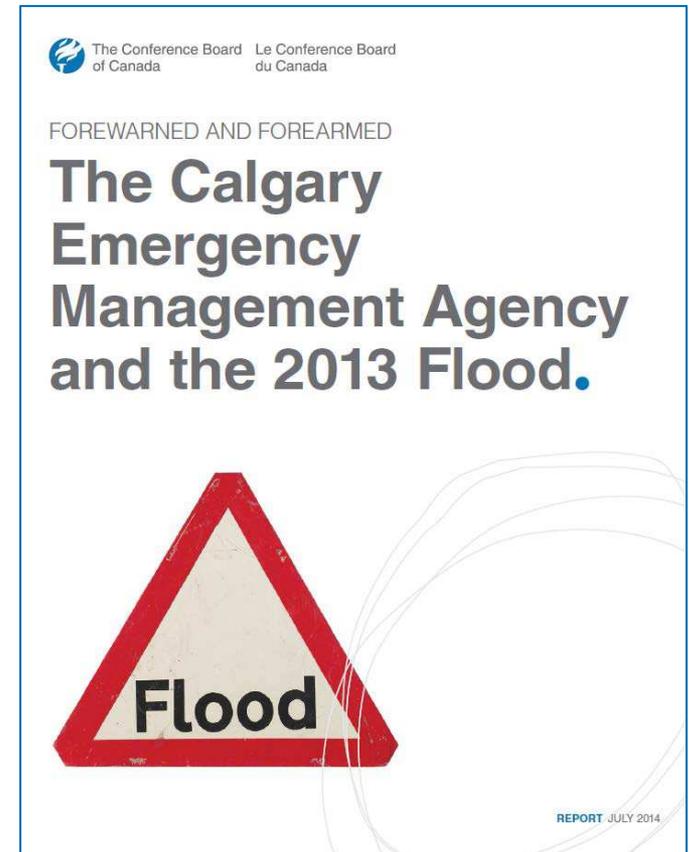
- Do you run psychometric testing or other assessments during recruitment to select for traits like teamwork?
- Many organizations want specific traits but don't recruit for them.
 - Some traits can be trained and reinforced.
 - But a lot is still dependent on the person.
- There is a need to recruit the right skills, culture and attitude when building resilient teams.



Image courtesy of Stuart Miles at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Insight 3: People Are Your Pillars.

- The mental health of first responders is very important.
 - One of our recommendations from the 2013 Calgary Flood report.
- Tired individuals don't always make the best decisions.
 - The mental effects of a disaster can linger and take a toll later on.
- It can be difficult for first responders to acknowledge that they need help and rest.



Insight 3: People Are Your Pillars.

- Leadership can make or break your emergency response.
- It enables flexibility, trust and the environment for innovation.
 - Cited as a key driver for FEMA's successful Field Innovation Team.
- A combination of experience, knowledge and personal traits create good leaders.
 - Organizations need to foster an environment that constantly enables good leaders to emerge.



Image courtesy of bluebay at FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Insight 3: People Are Your Pillars.

- People can ultimately make or break the response to an emergency.
- Building resilience requires organizations to have the right people with the necessary skills, knowledge and traits.
- The short- and long-term mental health of those responding to emergencies needs to be managed well.
- This needs to be complemented with a leadership that encourages flexibility and innovation while promoting the growth of new leaders.

Three Key Insights For Building Resilience.

- This is not an exhaustive list but covers key recent insights:
 1. You can't do it alone.
 2. Build community resilience.
 3. People are your pillars.
- We fully expect this list to evolve over time with new ideas.
- Building resilience is not just about meeting a set of targets.
 - It requires constant evolution to meet new challenges.
- Consider how the insights shared across the next few days can be used to build your resilience to future emergencies beyond just wildfires.



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