

Provincial Emergency Operations Centre Action Plan

On the morning of January 12, 2020, the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre issued an emergency alert regarding the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station. The alert was sent in error. The Ministry of the Solicitor General conducted an investigation into the incident that identified a number of concerns with planning, procedures, training, communications and staffing.

The following chart outlines corrective actions taken and planned to help prevent future errors in emergency notifications and to strengthen the public alerting system in Ontario.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED SINCE JAN 12	
Area of concern	Actions
System verification/ testing process	a. Modified the Alert Ready System verification sequence to minimize the potential for human error.
	b. All messages used to test the Alert Ready system now clearly indicate they are test messages.
	c. Supervisors have been assigned the task to verify that duty officers are following shift change procedures.
	d. The Alert Ready system verification process now requires two duty officers to conduct the test.
	e. Distinct login credentials are now in place for the live and test platforms of the Alert Ready system to prevent an operator from logging into the live system by mistake.
Staff Training	All duty officers have completed refresher training on all procedures related to the Alert Ready system.
“End Alert” Procedure	A new procedure is now in place to ensure an “end alert” message is sent immediately should an emergency alert be issued in error.
French Resources	a. All alert notification template messages, including “end alert” messages are now available in French.
	b. All staff at the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre (PEOC) have been provided refresher training on emergency translation procedures.

ACTIONS UNDERWAY	
Staff Training	a. All supervisors at the PEOC will undergo training on the Alert Ready system and will be granted appropriate access to the system.
	b. Emergency exercise planning will include elements of critical thinking and atypical situations to test the PEOC decision making process for effective emergency alerts and response.
Provincial Emergency Operations Centre Staffing	The ministry will conduct a review of staffing at the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre.

ENGAGEMENT WITH PARTNERS	
National Alert Aggregation and Dissemination Governance Council (NAAD)	a. The ministry will request clarification from the NAAD governance council on the roles and responsibilities to eliminate any confusion surrounding who is responsible for issuing or ending emergency alerts, including those issued in error.
	b. The ministry will request that the NAAD governance council address the Alert Ready system issues identified in the report.
	c. The ministry will recommend to the NAAD governance council that the Alert Ready system be modified to require two-person verification for all live emergency alerts.