



OPERATION INTERSECT — A GROUNDBREAKING MULTI-STAKEHOLDER APPROACH TO EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Operation INTERSECT is an integrated readiness and response framework designed to mitigate, prevent, respond to, and recover from, emergencies and disasters. Operation INTERSECT has directly led to significant increases in:

- awareness and community participation;
- effective use of resources;
- enhancement of communications within and cooperation among agencies; and
- improvement of services to the community.

Lessons learned from previous major emergencies and disasters — both locally and internationally — provided the impetus for an integrated approach to readiness and response in Canada's National Capital Region (NCR). The creation of Operation INTERSECT was designed to ensure the highest level of public safety for public safety providers, residents, businesses and visitors alike.

In short, Operation INTERSECT is about sharing information among emergency response agencies to increase public safety in the event of a major event, such as a terrorist threat or a natural disaster. But in addition to disasters, the program is designed to co-ordinate support for more routine events that the NCR hosts, such as Canada Day, Fête national du Québec, l'Outaouais en fête and Winterlude.

Whether it is dealing with time-sensitive information, conducting routine business or planning for a major event, Operation INTERSECT enables participants to promote, enhance and optimize integrated response capabilities within the NCR. Due to the unique nature of the NCR, which encompasses two major cities, two provinces, and various national and international government institutions, there is a critical requirement to ensure a collaborative and cooperative approach to dealing with major events and threats in the region. Operation INTERSECT responds to that challenge with impressive results.

WHY OPERATION INTERSECT?

Most would agree, communities are increasingly vulnerable to natural, technological and deliberate human-caused emergencies and disasters — growing in number, kind and magnitude. The impact of these events has been increased numbers of human casualties, higher levels of infrastructure damage and destruction, and greater social and economic disruption. Many factors, individually and collectively, are contributing to this evolving, more challenging threat environment.

At the same time, NCR public safety agencies face the unique challenge of providing service in the nation's capital. For example, the inter-jurisdictional policing environment includes the Ottawa Police, Ontario Provincial Police, Gatineau Police, MRC des Collines, Sûreté du Québec, the RCMP and the Military Police. As well, there are enhanced public safety and security concerns raised by the fact that NCR is the seat of the federal government and the site of numerous foreign embassies and iconic landmarks such as the Parliament Buildings and the Governor General's residence. Unique events such as the G-8 and G-20 demonstrations, the Ice Storm, les Jeux de la Francophonie and September 11th, coupled with the current fiscal environment, have driven a need for a more effective and efficient public safety response.

In January 2005, police leaders initiated a project addressing an integrated response to national security threats within the NCR. A direction-setting workshop was held in February 2005 which began the initial work that led to the creation of the Operation INTERSECT Integrated Response Framework. Partners recognized that the operating environment presented both challenges (planned and unanticipated major events) and opportunities (intelligence gathering and sharing and inter-operability). As a result of a joint commitment to facilitate cooperation, information sharing and operational capability and effectiveness, the initiative that would become Operation INTERSECT was born.

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Every month since November 2007, the Operation INTERSECT Steering Committee (OISC) has been meeting regularly to review the NCR All Hazard Dashboard, update the various Action Plans and to discuss the activities of the Operation INTERSECT committees and working groups. Co-Chaired by Deputy Chief Sue O’Sullivan, Operations Support, Ottawa Police Service and Chief Superintendent Serge Therriault, Criminal Operations Officer, RCMP, “A” Division, Ottawa, the OISC’s mandate is to promote, enhance and optimize integrated response capabilities with the NCR in cooperation with all Operation INTERSECT partners.

Operationally, the OISC is also responsible for initiating Operation INTERSECT processes and plans and for providing membership to the NCR Event Operations Group as appropriate. Key INTERSECT committees and working groups include:

- **Law Enforcement and Intelligence Committee (LEIC)** — The LEIC, in cooperation with the broader intelligence community, ensures that Operation INTERSECT stakeholders have sufficient threat and hazard information to support decision-making related to operational readiness, alert levels and protective measures. Co-Chaired by Inspector Brian Redmond, Divisional Intelligence Officer, RCMP “A” Division and Phil Beahen, Director, Situational Awareness and Risk Assessment, Public Safety Canada, the LEIC also advises of the need to establish a Joint Intelligence Group (JIG) for major events and/or in response to changing threats.
- **Joint Planning Group (JPG)** — The JPG, Co-Chaired by Superintendent Charles Bordeleau, Ottawa Police Service and Superintendent Mike McDonald, OIC General Duty – Protective Policing, Technical and Protective Operations Facility, RCMP, has a mandate to develop options and plans to support an integrated response for assigned major events and in response to changing threats within the NCR in cooperation with all Operation INTERSECT partners.
- **Training and Awareness Working Group (TAWG)** — The TAWG mandate is to promote, develop, enhance and optimize integrated response capabilities within the NCR through the development and conduct of tailored individual and collective training. This group is co-chaired by Michael Sullivan, Ottawa Fire Service, and Staff Sergeant Shaun Brabazon, Ottawa Police Service.
- **Private-Public Partnership Working Group (P3 WG)** — The P3 WG mandate is to promote awareness and cooperation between all public and private stakeholders to help promote emergency preparedness and the resilience of industry, business, and communities, and to develop appropriate partnerships to enhance the safety and security of the NCR. This group is co-chaired by Trefor Munn-Venn, Director, National Security & Safety, Conference Board of Canada and Superintendent Charles Bordeleau, Emergency Services Unit, Ottawa Police Service.
- **Communications and Media Group (Comms & Media GP)** — This group provides media advice to stakeholders and develops internal and external media communications plans that alert, rather than alarm, and enhance public safety and awareness during times of instability and uncertainty. Co-chaired by David Pepper, Director, Community Development/Corporate Communications, Ottawa Police Service (with the other co-chair position currently vacant), the Comms and Media GP is multi-jurisdictional in nature and is an integral part of the Operation INTERSECT governance structure.

Improved Mobilization

When the unexpected occurs, INTERSECT partners can now quickly mobilize. Because of processes implemented by INTERSECT, they can now, on very short notice, arrange a teleconference call to get the partners together to share intelligence and information on unanticipated events. Most recently, this has been the case for the Tamil demonstrations and the Human Swine Flu (the latter was initiated on behalf of Ottawa Public Health supported by Ottawa Paramedic Service).

PARTNERSHIPS

Operation INTERSECT has been developed as an inclusive program under the leadership of the National Capital Region Strategic Security Council (NCRSSC). By design, Operation INTERSECT stakeholders include representatives from all three levels of government and senior leadership from regional Police, Fire, Paramedic, and Emergency Management services from the cities of Ottawa and Gatineau and the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

Principal stakeholders and members of the Operation INTERSECT Steering Committee include:

- City of Ottawa
- Province of Ontario
- Province of Quebec
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP)
- Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS)
- Public Safety Canada (PS)
- Privy Council Office (PCO)
- City of Gatineau
- Canadian Border Service Agency
- Sûreté du Québec (SQ)
- Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)
- MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais
- NCR Military Police (MP)

KEY COMPONENTS OF WORK PLAN AND RESULTS

The intent of Operation INTERSECT is to:

- be applicable to all-hazard incidents, regardless of size or complexity;
- provide standardized readiness and response structures, plans, processes and procedures for emergency service providers and municipalities; and
- provide for interoperability and compatibility between all public and private Operation INTERSECT stakeholders.

The goal is to help everyone understand and respond to the effects of a threat in a manner that alerts rather than alarms. Readiness means being proactive in anticipating and planning for emergencies. Some of the more recent notable achievements of Operation INTERSECT include:

Access to more resources

Operation INTERSECT promotes resource sharing. For example, during a high-profile case at the Ottawa courthouse, the Canadian Air Transport Security Agency (CATSA) was able to provide security screening capacity on short notice. This type of cooperation probably would not have been possible prior to INTERSECT.

- **Public launch** — On May 22, 2008, the Operation INTERSECT was publically launched during technical briefing at Ottawa City Hall. The event provided an opportunity to showcase Operation INTERSECT achievements.
- **Exercise Capital Shield V** — On January 18, 2008 Operation INTERSECT stakeholders participated in Exercise Capital Shield V, the fifth in a series of exercises developed and conducted to test, validate and improve Operation INTERSECT processes, plans and procedures. This activity involved over 80 participants representing all key stakeholders and involved a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) based exercise. The resulting 15 recommendations elements of which were subsequently incorporated into Operation INTERSECT program related activities.
- **Exercise Capital Shield VI** — On November 21, 2008, leaders and organizations representing religious and community centres, academic institutions, shopping centres and districts, and sports and entertainment venues participated in Exercise Capital Shield VI. The goal of the half-day exercise was to support organizations in the NCR in enhancing readiness and resiliency; promote greater understanding of Operation INTERSECT and existing programs within the NCR (Are You Ready and Soyez Prêt à Agir!) and to identify joint planning and preparedness opportunities and initiatives to support Operation INTERSECT objectives within NCR.

- **National Capital Region INTERSECT Counter Terrorism Security Officer Course** — In November 2008, a group of 20 Canadian representatives participated in a one-week counter terrorism security officer course provided under the auspices of INTERSECT by the British National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO). NaCTSO is made up of a special police team working within the British Centre for the Protection of the National Infrastructure (CPNI) based within Mi5. They have developed specialist knowledge and expertise in protective security and they train, task and coordinate a UK network of more than 300 police counter terrorism security advisors.
- **Operation INTERSECT SharePoint Web Site** — The INTERSECT SharePoint web site provides a central storage and collaboration space for documents, information, and ideas. It is a powerful tool for collaboration that helps INTERSECT members share information and work together. It is restricted to authorized Operation INTERSECT personnel only, and is intended for up to Sensitive but Unclassified information only.

Overall, Operation INTERSECT has increased community and emergency response capacity which has lead to:

- improved intelligence and information sharing within the NCR (i.e., communications channels have never been more open);
- improved decision-making (i.e., having more and better information leads to better decision-making);
- improved integrated response based on Integrated Response Guidelines (i.e., fostering a consistent approach by all actors);
- optimal use of resources (i.e., thousand of dollars saved through joint training exercises); and
- provided a model for other municipalities and complex jurisdictions (i.e., approach adopted by the Vancouver region in anticipation of the 2010 Olympics).

Improved Capability

INTERSECT partners regularly meet in advance of major events (Joint Planning Group) to share Operational Plans and do joint planning which has led to improved coordination and cooperation. These actions have directly resulted in increased public safety and security within the NCR leading to greater public confidence. For example, the February 2009 Presidential visit went off without a hitch, despite the President's impromptu visit to the market.

For the community Operation INTERSECT has:

- increased public safety and security within the NCR leading to greater public confidence;
- improved emergency response capability within the NCR;
- improved collaboration amongst all stakeholders to include the private sector, community groups and the public at large;
- improved resource management; and
- provided a model for other municipalities and complex jurisdictions.

THE FUTURE

Fostering Collaboration

As a result of the INTERSECT teleconference call on the Human Swine Flu situation, the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) met with INTERSECT partners at the airport (Ottawa Police, CATSA, Quarantine Officer, Airport Authority, etc.) to brief them on procedures for processing direct flights from Mexico and will be providing fit testing of the N95 respirator to Ottawa Police staff at the airport.

The Operation INTERSECT partners will continue working with public and private stakeholders to roll out the coordinated approach to public safety in the NCR. Operation INTERSECT partners will also continue sharing best practices with others. For example, the approach is being replicated in Western Canada in the Province of British Columbia and being piloted in the Greater Vancouver Regional District. INTERSECT Metro Vancouver is driven by the security preparations for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. While those in the NCR have already benefited from Operation INTERSECT, the approach is being recognized nationally and internationally as model for public safety partnerships integration.