

Ontario Community Emergency Assistance Program (OCEAP)



INFORMATION PACKAGE FOR POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS

May 2025

Who are we?

OCEAP is a small ground search and rescue team with approximately 30 active members. The Ontario Community Emergency Assistance Program (OCEAP) is a not for profit corporation and is registered as a Canadian charity with the Canada Revenue Agency.

OCEAP is a new vision in community education and participation in local search and rescue emergencies as well as disaster response. Our team works closely with local emergency services to provide them with professional, multi-role, community-based volunteer resources to respond to a variety of major incidents. OCEAP currently serves Port Hope, Cobourg and the County of Northumberland.

Articles of Incorporation

“To coordinate and manage volunteer emergency assistance teams to assist federal, provincial or municipal emergency services in times of need such as evacuation centres, search operations or field hospital deployments.

To provide education to the public on the basics of emergency preparedness by means of maintaining the program’s website as well as public seminars and classroom workshops.”

Why is OCEAP needed?

Throughout Ontario, communities are growing larger while funding and resources for emergency services struggle to keep pace. While certainly sufficient funding and resources exist in our communities for their day to day activities, there is little or no surplus capacity in the event of a large scale emergency or local disaster.

The OCEAP team works with their communities to determine what gaps may exist in their capacity to meet a large scale emergency and how locally trained and experienced volunteers may be able to best assist. OCEAP volunteers do not replace or take the place of any of the emergency services.

In an emergency, OCEAP volunteers simply cover off some of the more general tasks which may then free up the professional emergency services to handle more critical events.

Why are YOU needed?

Volunteers are the heart of this Program. We have no paid staff. Our volunteers provide thousands of hours back into the communities we serve every year. OCEAP needs dedicated and compassionate volunteers who are willing to go the extra mile to support all of Northumberland County. If you are this kind of person, we need YOU!

OCEAP at an incident

OCEAP volunteers choose their ‘on-call’ schedule in our D4H online scheduling system. Most volunteers are on-call 7 days per week, 24 hours per day and 365 days per year. Volunteers only respond to an incident or event when requested by OCEAP’s partners to do so. In addition to missing person calls, an incident may include a wide-scale power failure, flooding, tornado or severe storm. It may also include large scale road closures, a chemical spill, pandemic, nuclear incident, fire or train derailment. While each of these incidents may have a need for OCEAP volunteers, the use of OCEAP and it’s volunteer resources remain the discretion of the community emergency services leaders.

OCEAP Training

Upon acceptance, OCEAP volunteers receive standard basic training consisting of over a dozen educational modules. Our training package includes a combination of self study, computer based training / courses as well as both in-class and field training. This training ensures that all volunteers have a full understanding of the rules, regulations and expectations of the Program. This mandatory training also ensures that volunteers are capable of participating in a consistent manner that supports and meets the expectations of our emergency services partners.

Training topics include Team rules, regulations, basic ground search and rescue skills, radio handling and communications protocols, field (compass/GPS/What3words) navigation, field first aid and extraction. Monthly field training is held on the 2nd or 3rd Saturday of each month which reinforces the concepts taught on the computer and in the classroom.



OCEAP Community Support

The Team is often requested to assist the Communities we serve during special events. This includes OCEAP members assisting the Police or Fire services. This may include a variety of tasks including local safety patrols or monitoring road closure barricades. These taskings are critical to maintaining and promoting a cooperative relationship with our Community Partners. Members are required to assist whenever possible.

Qualifications Required

OCEAP requires all volunteers to meet the following requirements;

- 19 years of age or older;
- Successful completion of Grade 12 or equivalent;
- Ontario Class “G” (G/G2) drivers license and a reliable vehicle
- Able to respond to the Port Hope – Cobourg area within 60-90 minutes of an emergency call for service;
- Minimum Standard First Aid and CPR level C;* *within 4 months*
- Have and maintain a clear police background check and have no criminal record (without pardon). Every member must provide a Vulnerable Sector Screening form every year.
- Willingness to attend training, events or call outs.
- Access to the internet (for scheduling) as well as a mobile phone.

Upon acceptance to the Program, volunteers must:

- Attend a minimum of 4 trainings and 50% of Team meetings every year as well as attend as many Call Outs as possible;
- Attend and support events and activities where OCEAP is requested to assist by our Community Partners;
- Support the Team, including attendance at any fundraising events;
- Maintain their availability and contact information within OCEAP system at all times;
- Purchase and maintain the uniform and field kit as defined by OCEAP within one year of the start date;
- Agree to abide by the Rules and Regulations of the Program, as well as defined Standard Operating Procedures.
- Accept and sign non-disclosure and confidentiality agreements.

The Commitment Required

Time:

As detailed under the Training section, to maintain OCEAP’s constant state of readiness, volunteers must regularly attend meetings and trainings to ensure they are prepared.

Each Volunteers should expect to commit a minimum of 75 hours per year to this Program. This includes a minimum of 30 hours in field or class room training, 20 hours per year attending OCEAP sanctioned events or fundraising as well as 25 hours at call outs or emergency incidents.

Personal:

The events and incidents which OCEAP volunteers may be called upon to attend may be difficult for some people to handle. Disasters with loss of homes, loss of life, a missing child or senior have an emotional impact on us all. Volunteers must be capable of managing these emotions in order to fully support those who are in a time of great need – ‘So others may live.’

Financial:

OCEAP is a not for profit corporation registered with the Canada Revenue Agency as a charity (856860010R0001). OCEAP requires all of field volunteers to purchase and maintain a defined ‘kit’. The kit must include items such as dark navy or black cargo style pants, OCEAP shirt, boots, quality flashlight, etc. Most items such as clothing can be purchased at any store such as Marks, however, there are some items such as our Search vest can only be purchased through the Team Quartermaster. Members must remain in compliance to the OCEAP dress code. In general, **volunteers should expect to have expenses of approximately \$350 in their first year** to get field ready. This can generally be spread out over the first few months. Members should expect to spend an additional \$100 per year while they remain with the Program to maintain and upgrade their field kit.

OCEAP members who continue to meet the Team requirements may be eligible for the Search and Rescue tax credit.

Next Steps:

OCEAP is not for everyone. If you believe that you have what it takes to help this Program excel, to assist those in need and can make the commitment, we would like to meet you. Upon your request, we will arrange a telephone interview with you. At the interview we will discuss the

Team and answer any questions you may have. During your new recruit day, we request that you bring the following documents; your resume, a copy of your drivers license, a copy of your vulnerable sector screening police check (if you have it), a copy of your proof of Grade 12 graduation (or equivalent), a copy of your proof of First Aid and CPR level C certificate (if you have one). Do not bring originals – photocopies provided will be kept by OCEAP.

New recruit training is held three times per year (April, July, October, or as classes fill) – you will be provided the next available date during your interview.

To schedule your interview, please e-mail your request to info@oceap.ca

