



## Biography of John M Saunders

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As the Provincial Director for the Canadian Red Cross, John oversees disaster preparedness, prevention, mitigation, relief and recovery efforts within the province of Ontario. He is tasked to lead program development and is responsible for the overall management of these areas.

John's background includes years as a paramedic and training with the US Coast Guard's Search & Rescue team.

Prior to joining the Red Cross, John was a private consultant in Toronto with a primary focus on business continuity planning, Health & Safety and corporate emergency plan development.

In his work with the Red Cross and other organizations, he has been involved in the response to 9/11, SARS, several American Hurricanes, the Peterborough flood, multiple evacuations of First Nation Communities and was provincial lead in the coordination of the receiving of Canadians fleeing from the conflict in Lebanon/Israel (summer of 2006). He was also the Red Cross EOC Manager during the initial response to the 2004 Tsunami. Most recently he was part of the in-country assessment team shortly after the January 2010 Earthquake in Haiti

John has been actively engaged in the continuing development of the Emergency Management profession, serving as Vice President (East) with the International Association of Emergency Managers and Chair of their Government Relations Committee. John also serves as subject matter expert on the Advisory Committee for the development of the CSA Emergency Management Standard Z1600 along with the Steering Committee for Emergency Management Ontario's development of a standard IMS system for use in Ontario.

During his tenure as Provincial Director, he has focused on internal capacity building, strengthening of key provincial relationships, creating new partnerships and being an advocate for the consideration of those with special needs and vulnerable populations in respect to emergency planning and response. Some of his recent successes include tripling the number of trained volunteers, increasing emergency material resources to include six provincial emergency response vehicles/trailers, 15,000 cots, and 30,000 blankets strategically warehoused across the Province. He also promoted and developed the first steps in establishing a guidance document for ensuring full accessibility in shelter process and procedures.

John plays a valuable role on the Senior Management Team for the Provincial Red Cross office representing the CRC disaster program at the National planning table and serves as an official spokesperson for the Organization.

### **JOHN'S PRESENTATIONS ARE ON APRIL 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> WITH A KEYNOTE ADDRESS ON APRIL 7<sup>th</sup> AT THE CENTRE IN DRYDEN**

#### **Presentation: "Engaging and Embracing Social Media in Emergency Management"**

A recent study by the American Red Cross shows that many web users would turn to social media to seek help for themselves or others during emergencies – and they expect first responders to be listening. In this presentation, John Saunders, Director of Disaster Management in Ontario, will share with you the findings of this Red Cross report and what it means to us.

John will share with you information on the tools currently being used by the Red Cross; and report back on how social media was maximized when the ERU was deployed to Haiti.

This presentation will wrap up with some general thoughts about how disaster management can move forward with social media.

#### **Presentation: "Emergencies + Egos + Agendas does not have to equal Catastrophe"**

##### **"E+E+A does not have to = C"**

Emergencies (E) that have led to Catastrophe (C) can often be traced back to Egos (E) and Agendas (A). How do we move forward as a profession to prevent these dynamics from increasing the impacts of an emergency situation? What trends within the Emergency Management profession may contribute to preventing future catastrophes? John will be speaking from two unique perspectives that of being the Provincial Director of the Red Cross but also from his role as Vice President of the International Association of Emergency Managers – Canada Region.

#### **Keynote: "Red Cross in Haiti"**