



State Comptroller of Israel | Local Government
Audit Report | July 2025

Conduct During Emergencies and the
Swords of Iron War

Manpower in Emergency Situations in Local Authorities – Swords of Iron War



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Background

The local authority is defined as the "cornerstone for handling the home front" in emergency situations, given that it is the governmental entity in direct interface with the population residing within its jurisdiction, and because it meets the various needs of this population, both through its departments and in cooperation with government ministries and other bodies. For this purpose, it has at its disposal manpower resources and means which, in times of emergency, are an essential component in the provision of essential services. In emergency situations, significant changes may occur in the manpower structure of the local authority due to various external constraints. During routine times, the local authority must prepare for assigning extra workers as reinforcement and supplement to its emergency mechanisms and determine full staffing of the positions required for its functioning in an emergency, including the possibility of adding and mobilizing manpower if needed. In addition, the local authority must have a plan that designates manpower for the purpose of executing its duties in an emergency. The preparedness of the local authority and its mode of operation in an emergency are based on the principles specified in the "Master File for the Preparedness of the Municipality and Local Council for Emergencies" from 2021 (Emergency Master File). Based on the principles detailed in the Emergency Master File, each local authority must prepare a detailed emergency file tailored to its unique characteristics and needs. The Emergency Master File provides that the professional expertise of the authority's employees shall serve as the professional basis for their deployment in emergency situations.



Key Figures

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The number of volunteers' trainings in **Shfar'am** Municipality from 2022 until the end of the audit period – the lowest among the audited authorities. **Rehovot** Municipality held 13 trainings during this period (the highest number, respectively).

472

The total number of alarms sounded in the six audited authorities from the beginning of the war until November 19th, 2024.

3.3

The number of designated employees in **Hadera** Municipality per 1,000 residents – the lowest rate among the audited authorities.

**338
(15%)**

The quantity and percentage of positions staffed in practice during an emergency out of all routine employees in **Hadera** Municipality – the lowest percentage among the audited authorities.

5.7

The average monthly overtime hours per employee in October and November 2023 in **Hadera** Municipality. In **Shfar'am** Municipality, the average was 2.5 hours

25

The number of registered volunteers per 1,000 people out of the total population living in the jurisdiction of **Be'er Ya'akov** Municipality. There are no registered volunteers in **Shfar'am**.

0.4%

The rate of registered volunteers among the population of **Rehovot** – the lowest rate among the audited authorities.

Audit Actions



From March to August 2024, the State Comptroller's Office intermittently examined the level of emergency preparedness of the local authorities before the outbreak of the Swords of Iron War. Furthermore, the authorities' functioning during the first months of the war was also examined in terms of manpower, including the emergency manpower standard, the volunteer framework in emergencies and training of manpower for fulfilling



roles in times of emergency. The audit was conducted in six local authorities¹: The municipalities of **Be'er Ya'akov**, **Hadera**, **Migdal Ha'Emek**, **Rehovot** and **Shfar'am** and the **Shlomi** Local Council² (audited local authorities). Supplementary examinations were conducted at the Ministry of Interior, at the Emergency Human Resources Division of the Ministry of Labor, and at the Federation of Local Authorities in Israel.

Key Findings



Emergency Manpower Standard and Approval – Although the local authority is supposed to prepare a report on designated employees, the audit revealed that the Emergency Master File or other directives on the subject did not include any specification by the national emergency authorities, including the Ministry of Interior, the Home Front Command (HFC) and the National Emergency Authority (NEA), regarding the number of local authority employees needed for its operation in an emergency in accordance with the type of authority, its needs and characteristics, and the professional training required to fulfill each of the roles in an emergency. Moreover, it was found that the emergency standard was determined by each local authority separately: In **Be'er Ya'akov**, the standard was set for 155 employees (21% of the number of employees in routine); in **Hadera** – 383 employees (17%); in **Migdal Ha'Emek** – 410 employees (84%); in **Rehovot** – 964 employees (26%); in **Shfar'am** – 570 employees (67%); and in **Shlomi** – 79 employees (39%). A significant disparity between the number of employees working during routine times and their number during emergencies may cause deficiencies in the functioning of the local authority in emergency situations.





The Number of Designated Employees in the Audited Authorities – Differences were found in the rate of designated employees meeting the emergency manpower standard out of the total number of employees during routine time – 15% in **Hadera** (338 employees out of 2,190); 21% in **Be'er Ya'akov** (155 employees out of 756); 25% in **Rehovot** (920 employees out of 3,682); 35% in **Shlomi** (70 employees out of 201); 66% in **Shfar'am** (561 employees out of 851); and 82% in **Migdal Ha'Emek** (402 employees out of 490). A low rate of employees during an emergency may make it difficult for the local authority to fulfill its roles during an emergency. The Ministry of Labor's Policy on Updating and Reporting stipulates that the Ministry shall check whether


- 1 The local authorities that were audited (with the exception of **Shlomi** Local Council) were not among the authorities that were evacuated or that accommodated a significant number of residents. The State Comptroller's Office will publish a report on the topic of **Evacuation and Absorption of the Population following the Swords of Iron war**.
- 2 In **Shlomi** Local Council, some aspects were examined given the security situation prevailing in the area and the evacuation of the population and some of the council's employees.



the standard set for a local authority enables it to deliver the outputs or services required from it in an emergency. However, the audit revealed differences among the audited local authorities with regard to the number of employees designated for emergency times, their percentage of the total number of employees and the position fill rate during emergencies.

 **Managing the List of Designated Employees in the Audited Authorities** – The lists of emergency employees provided by the audited authorities do not include all the details that are essential for contacting employees in various emergency situations, such as a phone number, email address and important details regarding employees' assignment. In addition, it was found that in the municipalities of **Be'er Ya'akov, Hadera, Migdal Ha'Emek, Rehovot** and **Shfar'am**, the lists of emergency manpower included employees who had left or reached retirement age, since the municipalities had failed to remove these employees from the lists or replace them with other employees. It was further found that the Ministry of Labor did not implement controls to identify employees who had passed retirement age and were still included in the list of designated workers submitted by the audited authorities.

 **Frequency of Updating the Designated Employees Report** – Although the Ministry of Labor's Policy on Updating and Reporting stipulates that employees' staffing data must be updated at the beginning of each calendar year, including unstaffed positions, manpower reduction and updating of officials, the audit revealed that the audited local authorities updated the designated employees report in various ways: the municipalities of **Be'er Ya'akov, Hadera, Rehovot** and **Shfar'am** and **Shlomi** Local Council updated the report periodically and not continuously; on the other hand, the municipality of **Migdal Ha'Emek** updated the report as needed all the time. The audited municipalities updated the designated employees report during the war (in 2024) and **Shlomi** Local Council updated its designated employees report in July 2023.

 **Training of Director Generals, Cluster Managers and their Deputies in the Local Authorities** – Despite the detailed directive in the Emergency Master File, according to which director generals, cluster managers and their deputies are required to undergo designated training by the Israel National Resilience Institute (the Resilience Institute), it was found that as of August 2024, the municipalities of **Be'er Ya'akov, Hadera, Migdal Ha'Emek, Rehovot** and **Shfar'am** had not trained all the senior officials in their emergency team as required, as follows: In **Be'er Ya'akov** two deputy cluster managers had not yet been trained; in **Hadera**, five deputy cluster managers, two cluster managers, and the municipality's director general had not yet been trained; in **Migdal Ha'Emek** three deputy cluster managers, a cluster manager, and the municipality's director general had not yet been trained; in **Rehovot**, two cluster managers and two deputy cluster managers had not yet been trained and in **Shfar'am**, six deputy cluster managers, six cluster managers, and the municipality's director general had not yet been trained.



The Volunteer Framework in the Audited Local Authorities – It was found that in the municipality of **Be'er Ya'akov**, 330 volunteers had been added to the municipality's volunteers pool since the beginning of the Swords of Iron War; in the municipality of **Hadera**, 1,213 volunteers had been added; in the municipality of **Migdal Ha'Emek**, 375 volunteers had been added; in the municipality of **Rehovot**, approximately 600 volunteers had been added; no volunteers had been added in **Shfar'am** Municipality. The significant gaps in the number of volunteers recruited since the beginning of the Swords of Iron War in each of the audited local authorities indicate the differences in the perception of volunteering in the audited authorities and the extent of reliance on them. Despite the importance attributed to the establishment of a volunteer framework, its operation, and its continuous management during routine times – an importance that arises from the inter-ministerial policy, various documents published by the Home Front Command, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs and the Emergency Master File – the audit showed that the various emergency bodies, including the National Emergency Authority, the Home Front Command, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Interior, had not acted to regulate the operation of the volunteer framework in the local authorities and had not set mandatory criteria for operating the framework, including in ways that would assist the authorities in integrating the volunteer framework into their emergency manpower. Despite the importance of preparing a procedure for recruiting emergency volunteers in advance, **Shfar'am** Municipality had not prepared a procedure for absorbing emergency volunteers.

Prevention of Sexual Harassment Training for Volunteers – It was shown that in all the audited authorities, there were gaps related to prevention of sexual harassment training for volunteers: **Be'er Ya'akov** Municipality claimed that the person in charge of preventing sexual harassment in the municipality had recently undergone training on the subject and that volunteers' training would be scheduled for 2025; the municipalities of **Hadera** and **Migdal Ha'Emek** asserted that no training had been provided and no actions taken on the subject. The municipality noted that in times of emergency, temporary volunteers were usually recruited, the majority being random volunteers who enlisted under a "call for applications" designated for a specific purpose. Rehovot Municipality stated that while it was not required to do so, in each volunteer project volunteers were given training, during which they received all the instructions relevant to that project.

The Volunteer Framework in Shfar'am Municipality – Despite the fact that the Emergency Master File provides that the local authority shall establish a committee to coordinate volunteers led by the population cluster, it was found that Shfar'am Municipality had not established a volunteer unit nor appointed a designated manager in charge of it. It was further found that some of the volunteers in Shfar'am Municipality were managed by the head of the Welfare Department.

Audits and Exercises Pertaining to Emergency Preparedness – The audit revealed findings that were consistent with the lessons learned in the exercises and



which had not yet been implemented by the time the audit was completed: **Be'er Ya'akov** Municipality had not appointed an HR cluster director with a professional affinity to HR; **Hadera** Municipality had not appointed a deputy HR cluster director; the HR cluster in **Migdal Ha'Emek** Municipality was not fully staffed; **Rehovot** Municipality had not prepared a pool of volunteers who would be ready to fulfill specific tasks in an emergency and **Shfar'am** Municipality had not established a volunteer framework, nor appointed an official to manage it.



Emergency Manpower Standard and Approval – The audited local authorities carried out the tasks assigned to them during the war, relying on the manpower at their disposal.

Wages and Overtime Pay during Wartime – It appears that the average overtime hours per employee in the audited local authorities did not exceed the quota of overtime hours allocated to local authority employees in under the temporary provisions and regulations published after the outbreak of the Swords of Iron War.

Recruiting Volunteers Following the Outbreak of Swords of Iron War – It was found that following the outbreak of the war, the municipalities of **Be'er Ya'akov**, **Hadera** and **Migdal Ha'Emek** reached out to their residents through their websites and social media, helped them register for the municipal volunteer database, arranged a pool of volunteers and assigned them in order to meet the needs.

Key Recommendations



It is recommended that the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Interior, according to their defined responsibilities in routine times as detailed in the Emergency Master File, formulate a list of events requiring immediate update of the designated employees report, in addition to the annual updates.



It is recommended that the Ministry of Labor implement additional controls of the lists of designated employees, as well as inspections to identify employees who have passed retirement age.



It is recommended that the Ministry of Interior, in accordance with its routine responsibilities as detailed in the Emergency Master File, and in collaboration with the local authorities, define the scope of manpower required for the local authority in an emergency, according to the number of its employees and residents; the Ministry should also define the minimum manpower required to operate the local authority in an



emergency. This is to ensure that in future emergency events, the local authorities will have sufficient manpower capable of meeting basic needs. It is further suggested that the Ministry of Interior consult with the Home Front Command and the Ministry of Labor when determining the aforementioned specifications. The local authorities of **Hadera, Migdal Ha'Emek, Rehovot, Shfar'am** and **Shlomi** should also include in their list of designated employees, the contact details of the employees, such as their telephone number and email address, and any additional essential information that may be used by the authorities in case of emergency.



The municipalities of **Be'er Ya'akov, Hadera, Migdal Ha'Emek, Rehovot** and **Shfar'am** should complete, as soon as possible, the training of the director generals, security supervisors, cluster managers and deputy cluster managers who have not yet been trained. Training of the authorities' employees and senior officials for fulfilling roles in times of emergency is essential for providing them with the appropriate know-how and capabilities to manage emergency situations and perform their roles skillfully and efficiently.



All audited local authorities should examine the recommendations made following the audit of the National Emergency Authority (NEA), consider them, and act to bridge the gaps identified in that audit, in order to improve the preparedness of the HR cluster for emergency situations. Moreover, the audited local authorities should follow the recommendations they received within the scope of the National Emergency Authority and Home Front Command exercises aimed at preparing their employees for the emergency scenarios that were drilled, and report on the rectified flaws to the appropriate entities.



The **Shfar'am** Municipality should establish a volunteer cell and prepare a procedure for absorbing volunteers in emergency situations; map the needs in times of emergency for which volunteers will be required; devise a plan for allocating volunteers according to needs; appoint a person who will be in charge of the volunteers and devise a plan for absorbing and preparing volunteers for the tasks expected in times of emergency. It is further recommended that the Shfar'am Municipality work to raise awareness among its residents with regard to the importance of volunteering in times of emergency and establish a unit that will manage the entire volunteer framework in times of routine and during emergencies. This should be done to create a municipal pool of volunteers that will assist the residents of Shfar'am in future emergencies and will allow the municipality of Shfar'am to ensure functional continuity in such times.



It is recommended that the audited local authorities examine the size of their volunteers unit and check whether the unit's manpower is adequate for fulfilling the unit's roles in times of emergency.



It is recommended that the local authorities of **Be'er Ya'akov, Hadera, Migdal Ha'Emek** and **Rehovot** examine the roles and areas in which training for volunteers is necessary, and accordingly devise a comprehensive plan for training volunteers in those



roles and areas, especially in areas that have been defined as essential. This is to maintain the volunteers' competence and improve the authority's preparedness for emergencies.



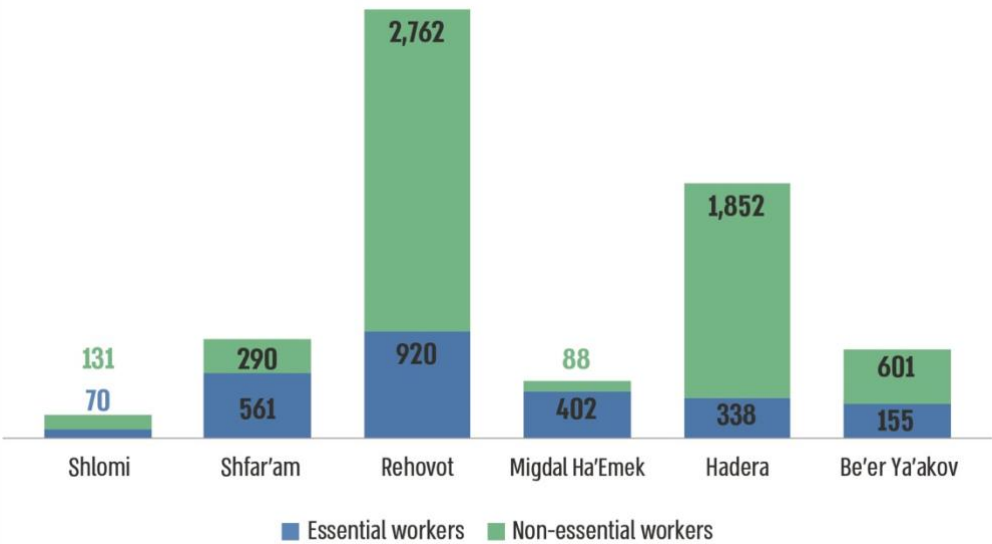
It is recommended that the local authorities **of Be'er Ya'akov, Hadera, Migdal Ha'Emek, Rehovot and Shfar'am** hold training sessions for volunteers on the topic of preventing sexual harassment.



It is recommended that the relevant entities, including the National Emergency Authority, the Home Front Command, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Interior – each body within the scope of its responsibility and authority – act to regulate the operation of the volunteer framework in the local authorities, in ways that will assist the authorities in integrating the volunteers with their emergency manpower. They should also take measures to train volunteers according to the needs of the local authorities and maintain the volunteers' competence, as well as maintaining ongoing communication with them in any way they find appropriate. It is also recommended that all the aforementioned bodies collect data regarding the number of volunteers in each authority, according to the fields in which they volunteer. This will facilitate the estimation of the scope of assistance available to the local authority.



Proportion of Workers Deemed Essential for Emergencies by the Local Authority



According to the report of the Commissioner of Public Bodies' Wages for 2021–2022 and data from the Ministry of Labor for 2024 (with the exception of the local council of Shlomi, whose standard was last updated in 2023); processed by the State Comptroller's Office.



Summary

In emergency situations, significant changes may occur in the manpower structure of the local authority due to various external constraints, including enlistment of authority employees for reserve duty and absence of employees due to the shutdown of educational institutes. The uncertainty associated with crisis situations requires planning and preparedness of the local authority in order to maximize the potential of its manpower in such situations, according to priorities that differ from those in routine times. The volunteer framework is also an important component in the local authority's HR cluster and the volunteers are supposed to participate in carrying out the tasks assigned to the authority in times of emergency. The local authority has tools at its disposal that can assist in emergency situations, including recruitment of new volunteers, activation of registered volunteers, external recruitment, and assistance provided by teenagers.

The of this audit reveal flaws related to the audited local authorities' preparedness for emergency scenarios. Inter alia, flaws were indicated regarding staffing of positions specified in the emergency standard; accrediting senior officials in the municipality for the roles of cluster managers and deputy cluster managers and the establishment and organization of a volunteer framework for emergencies, including training of volunteers according to the local authority's needs.

The findings also disclose that the scope of manpower required for the local authority in an emergency was not determined in accordance with the number of its employees and residents, and that the minimum threshold of manpower required to operate the local authority in an emergency was not set in order to ensure that in times of emergency, it would have sufficient manpower to meet the needs that arose. These flaws may impair the readiness of the audited authorities for various emergency scenarios.

The State Comptroller's Office recommends that the relevant entities, including the National Emergency Authority, the Home Front Command, the Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Interior – each body within the scope of its responsibility and authority – act to regulate the operation of the volunteer framework in the local authorities in ways that will assist the authorities in integrating the volunteers with their emergency manpower, as well as in training volunteers according to the needs of the local authorities and maintaining the volunteers' competence, as well as ongoing communication with them in any way they find appropriate. The State Comptroller's Office recommends that the audited local authorities rectify the flaws indicated in this report and consider the implementation of the recommendations included in it.