

Nova Scotia
Emergency
Management
Office

Emergency Management Guidance for Municipalities

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Emergency Management Guidance for Municipalities

Purpose of this document:

This document is intended to provide clarity and guidance to CAOs and Municipal EMCs on their responsibilities for emergency management and how they can effectively interact and engage with NSEMO.

Applicable Legislation, Regulations and Policy:

[Emergency Management Act](#)

[Civil Emergency Planning Regulations](#)

Nova Scotia Strategic Emergency Management Plan (SEMP)

Roles and responsibilities for emergency management

Emergency management in Nova Scotia is a shared responsibility, starting with individuals and families, and continuing through municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government.

Municipalities are the starting point for emergency response at the community level. They have the authority over fire and police services, and have obligations and responsibilities under the [Emergency Management Act](#).

The Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office (NSEMO) is mandated to provide a prompt and coordinated response to provincial emergencies. Provincial government departments have a large part to play in a coordinated emergency response, as outlined in the [Nova Scotia Civil Emergency Planning Regulations](#).

NSEMO Objectives

The central objectives of this policy are as follows:

- To assist municipalities in meeting their obligations under the *Emergency Management Act* and *Civil Emergency Planning Regulations* to facilitate necessary emergency planning and preparedness activities.
- To provide a standard framework for municipalities, including roles and responsibilities for the development and maintenance of Emergency Management plans and processes. This will enhance the resiliency to emergencies in Nova Scotia communities.
- To clarify the types of supports available to municipalities through NSEMO and provide guidance on when municipal officials should notify and engage the province when an emergency is imminent or occurring.
- To familiarize municipal leadership with the Request for Assistance and Alert Ready Request processes.

Application

Municipal responsibilities:

Municipalities are expected to ensure all required municipal responsibilities under the *Emergency Management Act* are met. These include:

- Subject to the approval of the Minister, establish and maintain a municipal emergency by-law.
- Establish and maintain a municipal emergency management organization.
- Appoint a coordinator of the municipal emergency management organization and prescribe the duties of the coordinator, which shall include the preparation and coordination of emergency management plans for the municipality.
- Appoint a committee consisting of members of the municipal council to provide advice on the development of emergency management plans.
- Prepare and approve emergency management plans.
- Section 10A of the *Act* requires a municipality to, upon becoming aware of it, inform the Department (NSEMO) of any real or anticipated event or emergency that could impact the health, safety, or welfare of Nova Scotians, their property, or the environment.

Emergency Management Coordinator roles and responsibilities

The *Emergency Management Act* requires all municipalities to appoint an Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC). Municipalities may choose to establish a Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO) with a shared EMC, but each municipality is responsible for meeting requirements in legislation and regulations.

The EMC is tasked with managing emergency preparedness, planning, response, and recovery for the municipality or REMO.

NSEMO provides training for EMCs and municipal officials to support their emergency management activities. When responding to an emergency, it is essential for EMCs to maintain communication with NSEMO early and often.

Acting EMC required

In the event a municipal Emergency Management Coordinator resigns or retires, or is unavailable to perform their duties, the municipality must designate a person to act as the EMC and notify NSEMO of details. A notification form is attached.

Municipal role before an emergency

- Ensure that the requirements under the *Emergency Management Act* are met.
- Maintain regular contact with NSEMO.
- Participate in emergency management training and exercising opportunities with NSEMO and other partners.

Municipal role during an emergency

- Activate the Emergency Coordination Centre/Emergency Operations Centre as required.
- Notify NSEMO if the emergency requires, or may require, provincial assistance and/or activation of the Provincial Coordination Centre (PCC).
- Consider whether a Public Alert is, or may be, required and fill out the Alert Ready Request form (Appendix A) with the key information. NSEMO has Alert Ready duty officers available to assist with the preparation and issuance of an alert.
- Complete the Request for Assistance / Notification of Emergency form (Appendix B) outlining possible resources required. This is an initial assessment and an opportunity to request NSEMO support. Additional needs are expected to arise as the situation unfolds. It is critical that the municipality notifies NSEMO as quickly as possible.
- Maintain regular communication with NSEMO through the EMPO (regular business hours), Duty Officer (after hours, holidays) or the PCC (if activated).

Reasons a municipality should contact NSEMO include:

- To notify NSEMO of an emergency that is taking place or developing (as required by the *Emergency Management Act*)
- When their ECC/EOC has been activated
- Upon enactment of all or part of a municipality's Emergency Management Plan
- Disruption of critical services (e.g., fire, police, hospital, 911, major transportation routes)
- If an emergency extends or may extend beyond their boundaries into other municipalities
- If their community requires support during an emergency
- Any local emergency that could cascade into a larger incident
- Requesting an Emergency Alert
- Request for assistance from any federal agency
- Any time a municipal EMC / Incident Commander has questions about processes, resources, or additional supports during an emergency event.

Process

Municipal EMCs or CAOs should only contact their Emergency Management Preparedness Officer (EMPO) during normal business hours. Outside of regular business hours, or on holidays, call the NSEMO Duty Officer number: **1-833-758-4540**.

If a municipal EMC or CAO is contacting the NSEMO DUTY OFFICER, please phone first. Please do not use email as your only point of contact after hours.

The Duty Officer will get more information and determine if the municipality is requesting provincial or federal assistance, then take the appropriate steps to notify NSEMO officials to begin the appropriate actions.

Once the EMC/IC has notified NSEMO, please fill out the Request for Assistance / Notification of Emergency (Appendix B).

EMC Checklist for PCC Activations

The single most important requirement of EMCs during an activation of the Provincial Coordination Center is the **flow of information**. It is crucial that all EMCs update NSEMO regarding the municipal impacts/response in a timely way. This can be done by sending a Situation Report (SitRep) to the PCC at pcc@novascotia.ca.

It is equally essential that EMCs share NSEMO briefings with CAOs and elected officials, as established in the municipality's Emergency Management plan.

NOTE: If the PCC is activated, the appropriate method of contacting NSEMO is through the PCC at **902-424-1891**. The EMPO may be working nights or otherwise be unavailable, and the PCC can ensure the municipality's issue is addressed as quickly as possible. EMPOs will be notified of any activities within their region.

One of the biggest challenges for the PCC during a significant emergency response is to track the opening and closure of comfort centres. Knowing where people can go to charge their devices, warm up or cool off, and get information or assistance is critical.

Please ensure NSEMO is aware of comfort centre information and that it is up to date. Email pcc@novascotia.ca or phone 902-424-1891. Email is the best option.

Checklist:

- ❑ Notify the PCC that the municipal EOC/ECC has activated and its planned hours of operation.
- ❑ Review NSEMO's ICS 230 (PCC schedule) and note times that updates are due for their SitRep, as well as times for briefings by the PCC.
- ❑ Submit required forms, reports, and documents for SitReps and participate in NSEMO briefings.
- ❑ Note the opening, occupancy, and closure of comfort centres with the PCC. Ensure the location and other details are correct.
- ❑ Notify the PCC when the EOC/ECC closes.

NSEMO Contact Information

DUTY OFFICER: To reach NSEMO's duty officer 24/7 call **1-833-758-4540**.

Regular Business: NSEMO's regular business line (1-866-424-5620 or 902-424-5620) is answered between 8:30 and 4:30 on weekdays. It is not monitored after-hours, on weekends, or on holidays. To reach a duty officer after hours, please call the number listed above.

Email: During activations, NSEMO's email address is pcc@novascotia.ca . NSEMO's general information email address is emo@novascotia.ca . Neither email is monitored after-hours, except during 24/7 activations of the PCC. **For immediate assistance contact the Duty Officer by phone.**

Monitoring

Municipalities are encouraged to complete regular reviews of their Emergency Plan and Hazard Risk Vulnerability Assessments. NSEMO offers a self-assessment tool, which EMCs or municipal officials can obtain through the contact information below.

Enquiries

Please direct all questions or requests related to this document to:

Lori Errington
Manager of Planning and Preparedness
Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office
Lori.Errington@novascotia.ca
902-424-2512

Emergency Management Preparedness Officers

Cape Breton: George Muise (George.Muise@novascotia.ca)

Northern & Central Nova Scotia: Dominic Fewer (Dominic.Fewer@novascotia.ca)

Western & Southwestern Nova Scotia: Andrew Mitton (Andrew.Mitton@novascotia.ca)

PCC Contact information during activations:

Bell phone sets: 902-424-1891 or 902-424-1887

Eastlink phone sets: 902-405-2205 or 902-405-2236

Satellite phones: 1-613-980-5938 or 1-613-980-5976

The PCC also monitors Trunked Mobile Radio EMO Alert/Shubie Channel

Email: pcc@novascotia.ca (during activations only)

Definitions

Agency Representative (ARep)

The primary point of departmental contact for information sharing (updates and alerts) to and from NSEMO. Agency Representatives participate in briefings and meetings, through teleconferences, online, or in person at the Provincial Coordination Centre during activations if their presence is required.

The ARep will ensure that their organization's senior leadership team is kept briefed on the event. They will also ensure that key information from their organization is shared with NSEMO to assist the broader whole of government emergency response.

The importance of this role cannot be overstated in the delivery of an effective response to an emergency at both the departmental and whole of government levels.

Coordinating Agency

The coordinating agency is the organization assigned by legislation, regulation, policy or a plan, or the required expertise, to coordinate the efforts of the different orders of government, supporting/logistic agencies and other emergency management partners (private sector, NGOs, etc.) to assist in the coordination of requests allowing the lead agency to deal with direct affects of the emergency.

Department Emergency Response Plan (DERP)

The Emergency Management Act, and Civil Emergency Regulations, require individual provincial departments to develop and maintain both emergency management response plans and business continuity plans that include critical infrastructure owned and operated by that department.

Emergency Management Act – Provincial

An act passed by the provincial legislature giving the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing authority over all matters respecting emergency planning, preparedness, response, mitigation, recovery, and emergencies that go beyond normal response in the province.

Emergency

Any incident, whether natural, technological, or human-caused that is causing (or could cause) substantial casualties, widespread damage to property, catastrophic interference in normal activities, or loss of confidence in the provincial government, requiring immediate attention and remedial action.

Hazard Risk Vulnerability Assessment

A process that identifies, analyzes, and prioritizes the full range of potential non-malicious and malicious threats. The process considers vulnerabilities associated with specific threats, identifies potential consequences should a threat be realized, and considers means to mitigate the risks.

Incident Command System

Is a standardized on-site management system designed to enable effective, efficient incident management by integrating a combination of facilities, equipment, personnel, procedures, and communications operating within a common organizational structure.

Legislated Lead

A governmental department retaining full legislative and regulatory responsibility over matters within their department's scope during an emergency response.

Lead Agency

The lead agency is the organization assigned by legislation, regulation, policy or a plan, or with the required expertise, to lead the management of a specific emergency event. The Coordinating Agency (NSEMO) offers supports to the Lead Agency in the emergency response.

Provincial Coordination Centre (PCC)

The designated location for the province's coordinated response to emergencies or emerging threats to the safety of Nova Scotians. It is located in the Eric Spicer Building at 33 Acadia Street, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. The PCC is not staffed around-the-clock unless activated.

Strategic Emergency Management Plan (SEMP)

The Nova Scotia Strategic Emergency Management Plan (SEMP) is the overarching plan that provides a comprehensive and coordinated whole-of-government approach to emergency management activities within the Province of Nova Scotia.

Supporting Agency

A supporting agency is an organization assigned by legislation, regulation, policy, or a plan, or with the required expertise, to assist in the management of a specific emergency event. Supporting agencies provide general or specialized assistance to the lead agency and/or NSEMO as required.

Annex A: NSEMO Emergency Notification and Request for Assistance Form (2022)**Annex B: NSEMO Alert Ready Request Form (2022)**