



**ROADMAP TO 2027** 2022 - 2027

Safety Branch

**2022 - 2027 STRATEGIC PLAN**



March 2022

Current world events and the global pandemic response continue to shine a light on the importance of health and safety. Locally, the pandemic response and, specifically, the contributions of the Safety Branch, have demonstrated how critical it is for programs and services to be agile in their ability to shift priorities to protect Nova Scotians and support communities to be resilient in navigating emergent threats to health and safety. Our ability to work collaboratively and compassionately has never been more important than it is now.

A strong strategic plan is a key enabler for the Safety Branch to continue to be responsive to newly identified priorities and emerging issues. Clarity on our direction and the impacts we want to have to make Nova Scotia an even safer place to work will be our beacon as we move forward through this pandemic and beyond, our roadmap for success.

It is clear to me and others that the Safety Branch team is committed to working together within the branch, across government, with the business community and the many partners, clients and communities we serve in pursuit of better safety outcomes. I am grateful that so many of you have taken the time to contribute your knowledge and expertise to the development of this strategic plan. Each of us have a unique opportunity to influence and shape the branch's priorities and direction as we look to the future. The core values articulated herein will help us define what success looks like in how we work with others and provide a solid foundation for important conversations and action.

The **Roadmap to 2027**, our strategic plan, will positively influence not only what we do and how we do it, but also how we continue to impact individuals and businesses that have a vested interest or are regulated by our work. It establishes where we are now, where we want to be in the future, and guides how we will work together to get there.

The branch's response to the pandemic highlighted our resilience, flexibility, and capability. New challenges lie ahead and this **Roadmap to 2027** is our renewed commitment to action; to keeping pace with the changes around us so health and safety is valued, prioritized, and lived in Nova Scotia.

Thank you for all you do. I look forward to the collaboration across the Branch and beyond as we work together to advance along our *Roadmap*!

**Gary O'Toole**

Senior Executive Director, Safety Branch  
Labour Skills and Immigration

# Who We Are

As part of the Department of Labour, Skills, and Immigration, the Safety Branch supports the delivery of effective and efficient regulatory management to enhance the protection of the public and workers' safety through education and outreach, inspection and enforcement, equipment registrations/permits and licenses. We have three divisions:

## Occupational Health and Safety

The division concentrates its efforts on promoting safe and healthy workplaces, safe work practices, and safe standards that protect people at work. It does this by relying on the internal responsibility system, which acknowledges the shared responsibility of employers and employees for workplace health and safety.

## Technical Safety

The division works with industry, municipalities, businesses and the public to safely regulate amusement devices, elevating devices, boiler systems and plants, electrical work, cranes and fuel safety using a range of compliance tools including certification, registration, licensing, permitting and inspections.

## Strategic Planning and Accountability

The division leads the formulation, planning, integration, review and evaluation of strategies, policies, programs and services that advance the overall purpose of the Safety Branch and supporting branch activities with information, systems and analytics.

## Our Partnership with the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB)

The Safety Branch has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) to formalize the roles and responsibilities and improve collaboration around the management of key issues and the delivery of certain services to meet the individual mandate of each organization, clarify how both organizations will work together, integrate services, and, increase consistency in approach and communication. We continue to strengthen and expand partnerships, set collective goals, prioritize policy needs, and develop governance to support our activities.

The WCB / LSI joint strategic priorities include:

- psychological health
- small business development and support
- enhancing WCB coverage
- health care

# Vision, Mission, and Values

Driving results for a safer tomorrow

## VISION

Health and safety is valued, prioritized, and lived in Nova Scotia.

## MISSION

Our mission is to support and positively impact technical and occupational health and safety throughout Nova Scotia by setting, promoting, verifying, and enforcing requirements.

## VALUES

In addition to the *Values, Ethics & Conduct: A Code for Nova Scotia's Public Servants*, the Safety Branch has identified the following values that guide our work:

**Diversity** – we are committed to creating an inclusive culture where every branch member feels able to make a valued contribution, feels a sense of belonging, and can deliver their very best work as a result

**Cooperation** – we will work together and support each other with integrity through meaningful and diverse partnerships for mutual benefit

**Engagement** – we will engage staff, clients, and interested parties to understand their needs, improve communication, and support improved decision making

**Trust** – we will create and foster a safe space that holds all of us accountable for our actions including being respectful, authentic, and encouraging honest conversation

**Adaptability** – we strive to challenge “the way it’s always been done” and learn from experience to continuously improve and find new and creative ways to address health and safety

**Collaboration** – we are intentional about building partnerships and working together to achieve the best possible outcomes



# Our Programs

In 2020-2021, the branch undertook a formal review to develop and document more clearly defined programs to improve our work using a standard approach that considers the needs of our clients and impacted / interested parties. The review served to outline key focus areas of work within each program, identify the main activities that support those key focus areas, as well as recognizing the connections between programs / services.

## **Inspections & Compliance**

- Building Awareness – building knowledge and common understanding to improve compliance
- Preventative Support – employees, employers, and businesses are motivated to strive for continuous improvement and to meet, sustain and exceed health and safety standards
- Intervention – decrease and prevent future or repeated occurrences of serious incidents / equipment failures

## **Licensing & Permits**

- Compliance Services – process applications / payments for permits, licenses, and exams
- Administration – operational support for clients, the public, staff, and other departments

## **Technical Services**

- Compliance Services – inspections, information, and special projects
- Prevention Services – research and analysis; policy, priorities and regulation; proactive risk management and injury prevention initiatives
- Support Services – external relations / engagement; partnership approaches; risk / hazard program resources and tools

## **Awareness & Outreach (A&O)**

- Promotional Tools & Resources – tools, materials, and resource; creative sentencing
- Information & Client Services – providing information and guidance
- Stakeholder Relations & Engagement – internal / external engagements and relationship building

## **Strategic Planning & Accountability (SPA)**

- Policy – policy, legislation, and standard operating policy and procedures (SOPPs)
- Innovation and Planning – innovation, strategy, planning, and governance
- Information & Analytics Solutions (IAS) – systems, information, analytics, and quality assurance

## **Operations (Ops)**

- Human Resource Administration – lead and provide effective delivery of our people strategy (Join Us, Learn with Us, Thrive with Us)
- Training and Orientation – coordinates all onboarding and training for branch staff
- Financial Services – budget review and expenditure control / tracking / reporting

# Strategic Goals

## **Increase safety through service delivery excellence**

We will continue to modernize and improve our programs, compliance services, and resources.

To accomplish this, we will:

- collaborate with industry to modernize health and safety rules and address emerging issues
- support our inspectorate in all compliance activities
- drive safety culture by being leaders in safety in the province
- ensure a consistent yet flexible approach to interacting with individuals and the business community
- explore and implement client-centric digital service options and tools
- ensure expectations are clearly communicated both internally and externally
- improve accessible communication and availability of safety information
- foster greater collaboration between our divisions
- assess clients needs and adjust our programs accordingly

## **Develop a positive workplace culture**

We will grow an inclusive culture where all branch members are engaged and supported.

To accomplish this, we will:

- create and promote openness and trust that allows all to respectfully voice their opinions with confidence
- hire, grow, and support team members to thrive through our people strategy
- build and maintain open communication to clearly convey our plans and priorities to ensure best use of resources, and hold ourselves accountable to those plans and priorities
- continue to build a welcoming workplace that embraces equity, diversity, and inclusion and allows all to participate and contribute
- create a culture where we live our core values in all aspects of our work
- actively support health and safety and psychological well-being in the branch

## **Build collaborative partnerships and relationships**

We are committed to strong partnerships and relationships to advance health and safety outcomes in NS.

To accomplish this, we will:

- create and enhance strategic relationships to increase our reach, raise awareness, and access to usable information
- strengthen our community presence through regular engagement with industry and sector groups
- work with business leadership
- reach out to those we haven't engaged with before (e.g. new businesses)
- continuously engage the business community to understand their needs

## Impacts We Want our Work to Have

To mitigate hazards that could harm people or property and see a decrease in illnesses, injuries, and fatalities, we want to ensure that employers, employees, and Nova Scotians:

- are aware of and have easy access to clear health and safety rules and information
- are supported to understand and apply health and safety rules
- are given opportunities to provide input and feedback around branch services
- are encouraged to continuously improve their health and safety outcomes
- are held accountable for compliance

## Strategic Priorities

Consideration of the strategic issues that emerged during the strategic planning process resulted in the following strategic priorities the Safety Branch will focus on for 2022-2027:

### **Developing and implementing branch governance**

Developing consistent decision-making across the branch by building on our governance framework:

- organizational structure (programs, data systems, roles and responsibilities, communication channels)
- controls (HR, risk, quality management, policies and procedures, measures, reporting)
- standards of behavior (leadership framework, code of conduct, corporate policies, values)

### **Developing and implementing information systems in the branch**

Having systems in place that support our work, our clients, the business community, and internal staff including:

- development and implementation of Amanda for Technical Safety (TS)
- introduction of *Tableau*® for improved data collection, reporting, and analytics in the branch

### **Branch data evolution**

Advancing the branch's capacity for data collection, access, usage, and management to improve information both internally and externally including:

- developing digital options to increase information flow, communication, outreach, and awareness

### **Developing psychological health policy and programming**

Changing how workers in Nova Scotia will be supported in relation to both psychological and physical injuries in alignment with government's "universal mental health coverage" priority

### **Building our branch approach to innovation and applying it**

Creating a more risk tolerant internal culture that will grow the branch's capacity for creative problem solving and encourage branch-wide collaborative solutions and communication

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