



# **ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT**

2024-25

Emergency Management

© Crown copyright, Province of Nova Scotia, September 2025

Accountability Report 2024–2025

ISBN: 978-1-77448-804-1

Contents

**Accountability Statement ..... 3**

**Department of Emergency Management – Introductory Statement..... 4**

**Measuring our Performance..... 4**

    Goal: Build a Culture of Preparedness .....4

    Goal: Improve Nova Scotia’s critical incident response.....5

    Goal: Deliver high quality regional services .....7

    Goal: Create, prepare and deploy the Nova Scotia Guard.....7

    Goal: Coordinate with NGOs that respond before, during and after emergencies.....7

    Goal: Create Emergency Management Standards and Regulatory Frameworks.....7

**Financial Results ..... 9**

**Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act..... 11**

## Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Emergency Management for the year ending March 31, 2025, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. The reporting of the Department of Emergency Managements' outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgements, and opinions by Department of Emergency Managements' management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Department of Emergency Management's management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the 2024-25 Business Plans.

Original signed by:



---

Kim D. Masland  
Minister of Emergency Management

Original signed by:



---

Sandra McKenzie  
Deputy Minister  
Department of Emergency Management

## **Department of Emergency Management – Introductory Statement**

On September 20, 2024, legislation was tabled to establish the Department of Emergency Management. The Department brings resources, programs and services under one roof for preparedness, incident management and recovery which improves coordination, communication and partnerships. The Department brings together the former Emergency Management Office from the Department of Municipal Affairs, and the Business Continuity Program Office and the Public Safety and Field Communications Team from Service Nova Scotia. The new Department allows us to respond to emergencies more efficiently and in better collaboration with our partners across the province.

The Department of Emergency Management is responsible for coordinating disaster and emergency planning, preparedness, response and recovery activities to ensure that Nova Scotians are safe, prepared and resilient in the face of disasters and emergencies. The Department leads the coordination and co-operation of partners and resources during provincial level critical incidents, supports municipal and other partners in regional level and local events, administers the province's 911 service, maintains critical communications infrastructure and supports operations of our regional emergency management centres. The Department also works to ensure critical government services continue to function during and after disruptive events.

## **Measuring our Performance**

### **Goal: Build a Culture of Preparedness**

In the past year, the Department of Emergency Management (DEM) was focused on building our communications with Nova Scotians and the ways in which we share information. Phase 1 of our Critical Incidents website development was completed and is not yet live to allow for other content to be added. It will launch in fiscal year 2025/26. The objective of the website is to ensure that Nova Scotians have access to critical information when an emergency happens through coordinated communications across government.

DEM led initiatives to help Nova Scotians become more resilient and prepared before, during and after emergencies through public education campaigns (i.e., Emergency Preparedness Week 2025, Hurricane Preparedness, Wildfire Video, etc.), NS Guard sessions and community engagements, and annual alert ready tests which were carried out in May and November 2024. Finally, DEM contracted with Public Emergency Alerting Services Inc (makers of the Alertable App) to develop the NS Alerts App which allows Nova Scotians with access to 3G or a Wi-Fi signal to receive alerts. Work began on the design and the development of the App and once live, it will give more people access to life-saving information across the province and can

automatically translate alerts in real time in over 32 different languages, depending on user preference. The App is expected to launch in Summer 2025.

To support interoperability and critical incident response, DEM completed a roll out of 2,000 more trunked mobile radios to emergency responders. All police, fire and Emergency Health Services (EHS) now have access to encrypted TMR radio communications.

**Goal: Improve Nova Scotia’s critical incident response**

DEM advanced implementation of the following [Mass Casualty Commission \(MCC\) Final Report Recommendations](#):

- Recommendation V.9 Creating Safe Spaces to Report Violence
- Recommendation V.16 Putting Women’s Safety First
- Recommendation P.10 - Capturing Information from 911 calls
- Recommendation P.12 a – Call-Taker Training and Standard Operating Procedures
- Recommendation P.16 b&c - Interoperability During Critical Incident Response
- Recommendation P.22 - Public Education about Public Warnings
- Recommendation P.65 - Strengthening Nova Scotia 911

DEM supported or managed the following major incidents:

Activation/Deployment	DEM Teams	Activation/Deployment Date	Days active
Search Support – Highlands Search, Missing Snowmobilers	PSFC	February 15, 2025	1
Hazmat Spill at Bedford Institute of Oceanography (BIO)	PCC	January 22, 2025	0.5
Winter Snowstorm	PCC	January 5, 2025	2
Winter Snowstorm	PCC	December 20, 2024	2
Search for missing diver in Digby	PSFC	August 30, 2024	1
Search Support – Missing 13-year-old in South Alton, Kings County	PSFC	August 27, 2024	0.5
Flash Flood Event	PCC	July 11, 2024	2
Heat Dome Event	PCC	June 19, 2024	3
Search in Trenton	PSFC	April 11, 2024	2

DEM Teams: Provincial Coordination Center (PCC) Emergency Activations, NS Guard Deployments and Public Safety Field Communications (PSFC) Agency Communications Support Deployments

**Other key statistics in 2024/25:**

- 911 Call Volume: 334,571 calls
- DEM championed a province-wide training exercise – Nova Charlie which was held in Spring 2025. In alignment with MCC recommendations, this training exercise included

discussion on recognizing the signs of gender-based violence and intimate partner violence in emergencies.

- 118 individual participants registered from 52 separate organizations, including:
  - 22 Municipal partners;
  - 5 First Nations partners;
  - 8 Provincial Departments;
  - 5 Critical Infrastructure partners;
  - 4 Federal Departments; and
  - 8 NGO partners.
- The Incident Management Division (IMD) offered 40 training opportunities and 15 exercises and outreach events.
- The Business Continuity Division provided a total of 85 training sessions, workshops and exercises for government employees to address disruptions and risks, including mail disruption, storms and hurricanes and to support Departments to develop their business continuity plans.
- 227,714 calls to the Shubenacadie Radio Communications Centre (SRCC)
- 1,148 Disaster Financial Assistance Files closed

The Department strengthened provincial and regional coordination by convening an Atlantic Caucus of Deputy Ministers with responsibility for Emergency Management (topics included joint federal, provincial and territorial engagement, mutual aid, training, etc.).

DEM positioned Nova Scotia as an Atlantic leader and innovator in Emergency Management through the creation of the Public Safety and Field Communications Agency (PSFC). The Agency has the mandate to deliver and manage public safety and public works technologies and communications systems, services, and infrastructure within Nova Scotia. The PSFC team will be able to fully explore service delivery partnerships, capitalizing on a municipal/provincial/federal/private shared services model. This model will support better client services resulting in enhanced public safety for Nova Scotians. Aggregating the delivery of services across additional clients will allow for the creation of an Atlantic Canadian Centre of Excellence for communications in Nova Scotia.

Finally, the roll out of Next Generation 911 (NG 911) has begun to support faster, safer and more informed emergency responses. This moves the system from a voice-only 911 system to a fully digital, Internet Protocol (IP) – based platform. It's designed to improve emergency response in speed, accuracy and reliability. It will allow for Real Time Text (RTT) in addition to calling 911 and will offer the ability to better process calls from other forms of technology such as smart watches, personal alerts devices, and computer tablets, etc.

DEM completed the RFP process and signed a contract with the successful NG 911 solution vendor. The NG 911 deployment is now underway and will be completed during 2025/26.

## **Goal: Deliver high quality regional services**

DEM began establishing six (6) Regional Emergency Operation Centres (REOCs) to support enhanced regional coordination, increased support to municipalities, and ongoing engagement of local community groups and volunteers. They will work with all Municipal Regional Emergency Management Organizations (REMO) across the province. These REOCs will be located in Sydney, Antigonish, Bible Hill, Kentville, Enfield and Liverpool.

## **Goal: Create, prepare and deploy the Nova Scotia Guard**

Emergencies in Nova Scotia are increasing in intensity and frequency. This is putting increased demands and pressure on volunteer first responder organizations to do more for longer periods of time.

We know that when emergencies happen, Nova Scotians want to help in any way they can. The NS Guard's role is to support the work of first responders, not replace them. The Nova Scotia Guard proactively works with volunteers and community-based organizations who want to help coordinate them in an emergency.

DEM has launched a recruitment campaign for NS Guard members and is geotargeting recruitment efforts to ensure volunteer presence across the province. As of March 31, 2025, DEM had 1,771 registered NS Guard members.

Nova Scotians can register to join the Nova Scotia Guard online at [www.nsguard.ca](http://www.nsguard.ca).

### **NS Guard Key Facts & Figures as of March 31**

- 1,771 total registrations
- 911 members deployable (completed criminal record check and orientation)
- 19 community groups registered

## **Goal: Coordinate with NGOs that respond before, during and after emergencies**

DEM continued to work with partner NGOs to ensure a coordinated response during emergencies. DEM is working with identified NGOs to supplement the NS Guard through just-in-time contracts to assist with deployments and build the capacity of NGOs who play a role in preparing, assisting and recovery of an event through training, partnerships, etc.

## **Goal: Create Emergency Management Standards and Regulatory Frameworks**

DEM was created through legislation on September 20, 2024. *The Emergency Preparedness and Nova Scotia Guard Act* lays the foundation for the Department's role in a strengthened whole-of-province approach to emergency management.

The new Act and pre-existing *Emergency Management Act* set the stage for significant regulatory and policy changes in the coming years:

- The Department has established an advisory table with Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) from municipalities around the province to work on four critical areas of policy:
  - REMOs
  - Vulnerable Persons Registries
  - Fire Dispatch
  - Public Alerting
- The Policy and Planning Branch has started the process of engaging key partners in developing a Threat Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment for the Province. This will help municipalities and REMOs identify and plan for threats and hazards at the community level.
- Based on new guidelines from the Federal government, the Department began conducting a significant overhaul of its Disaster Financial Assistance policy. When a large-scale natural disaster happens, the province may launch a Disaster Financial Assistance program. The federally funded program helps residents, small business owners, non-profits and municipalities by providing eligible funding for uninsurable losses. The focus of the program is on strengthening recovery efforts by building back better to minimize the impacts of future disasters.

## Financial Results

### Accountability Report – Financial Table and Variance Explanation

	2024-2025 Estimate	2024- 2025 Actuals	2024-2025 Variance
<b>Program &amp; Service Area</b>	<i>( \$thousands )</i>		
<b>Departmental Expenses:</b>			
Senior Management	-	254	254
Planning and Preparedness	870	12,999	12,129
Provincial Incident Management and 911	9,603	11,326	1,723
Regional Operations and Infrastructure	19,918	24,246	4,328
<b>Total: Departmental Expenses</b>	<b>30,391</b>	<b>48,825</b>	<b>18,434</b>
<b>Additional Information:</b>			
Ordinary Revenue	-	-	-
Fees and Other Charges	-	-	-
Ordinary Recoveries	(48,733)	(79,236)	(30,503)
<b>Total: Revenue, Fees, and Recoveries</b>	<b>(48,733)</b>	<b>(79,236)</b>	<b>(30,503)</b>
TCA Purchase Requirements	<b>6,379</b>	-	<b>(6,379)</b>
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	<b>50.0</b>	<b>56.9</b>	<b>6.9</b>

**Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:**

DEM expenses were \$18.4 million or 60.7 per cent higher than estimate primarily due to an increase of \$11.1 million for disaster assistance costs, which are partially recoverable from the Federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements program, a \$5.4 million increase in Trunked Mobile Radio costs for Public Safety and Field Communications, and other miscellaneous operating costs to stand up the new Department of Emergency Management.

**Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:**

DEM revenues, fees and recoveries were \$30.5 million or 62.6 per cent higher than estimate primarily due to an increase of \$30.0 million in Federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements program funding associated with recent and prior year disasters.

**TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:**

The tangible capital asset was underspent by \$6.4 million or 100 per cent primarily due to procurement process delays related to both the Next Generation 911 System equipment purchase of \$3.8 million and the Shubenacadie Radio Communications Centre software of \$2.5 million.

**Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:**

DEM FTEs were 6.9 higher than estimate as additional FTEs were added during the year once the former Office of Emergency Management was transformed into its own Department.

## Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

### Annual Report under Section 18 of the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labor Board.

A wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations;
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets;
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment; or,
- d) directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing.

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Department of Emergency Management.

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2024-2025
The number of disclosures received	None
The number of findings of wrongdoing	None
Details of each wrongdoing	Not Applicable
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	Not Applicable