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Item No. 13.2.1
Executive Standing Committee
May 26, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of Executive Standing Committee

FROM: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: May 9, 2025

SUBJECT: Emergency Management Project Charter and Crisis Comms Plan

ORIGIN

Staff Initiated Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This information report is intended to give an update on the status of the projects stemming from the KI report, dated March 2024, as attached to Item 13.1.1, Executive Standing Committee, May 27, 2024.

It includes the Emergency Management Program Charter and the status of the Municipal Crisis Communications Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Executive Standing Committee receive a presentation on the Emergency Management Project Charter and Crisis Comms Plan.

BACKGROUND

Staff engaged KI Emergency Management to undertake a review of HRM Emergency Management Program documents and determine the current state of state of documents that support Emergency Management program across all Municipal business units. The program approach to executing these projects presents a tremendous opportunity for collaboration with all business units within HRM, as well as external interested groups, and affected parties. This would represent a culture shift within the organization that could place emergency management planning at the centre of our business processes.

DISCUSSION

The KI report identified several recommendations which were defined as both, discrete, and interrelated projects, set against the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) standard. A review for

these projects was conducted, and weighed against other projects, related to the areas of responsibility of Halifax Emergency Management. After this review, a program charter was created to manage the portfolio of projects, serving as a strategic approach to ensure they align with an HRM's long-term goals, and maximize value. This included the projects identified in the KI report.

The following is a list of projects from the charter that are being currently actioned and their status.

Projects

1. The Strategic Plan for Emergency Management (EM Strat-Plan) – **Initiated:** Phase one will involve setting vision statement, mission, goals and objectives and establishing strategic working group.
2. Hazard Risk Vulnerability Assessment (HRVA) – **Execution:** This project is in phase two, with consultation with external critical infrastructure providers due for completion Q1 2025/26. Full report estimated by end of Q3 2025/26 with concurrent development of the HRVA tool.
3. Comprehensive Management Plan (CEMP) – **To be started:** This would replace the current Municipal Emergency Plan. The plan is dependent upon completion of the HRVA, however the CEMP could be completed as an interim plan prior to HRVA completion.
4. Continuity of Government Plan – **Planning:** This is being led by Legal & Legislative Services and supported by EM when required.
5. Business Continuity Plans (BCP) – **Execution:** BUs have completed their business impact assessments and BCP development tool inputs. Output from this tool to be transferred to BCP templates Q1 2025/25
6. Emergency Operations Centre Concept of Operations (EOC Con-Ops): **Planning:** Dependent on EM Strat-Plan. Duty officer position has been established.
7. Business Unit Emergency Plans - **To be started:** These plans are based on the CEMP and would start after completion and approval of the CEMP.
8. Resource Management Plan - **To be started:** Requires inputs from HRVA and completion of the CEMP. Would begin concurrently with the Business Unit Emergency Plans.
9. Emergency Management Training and Exercise Plan – **Execution:** Draft Emergency Management Training Plan complete. Final plan will require inputs from the Strategic Plan for Emergency Management and the Con-Ops.
10. Crisis Communication Plan – **Monitoring and Control:** This plan is complete.
11. HRM Evacuation Plan – **Planning:** Will require completed HRVA to ensure a fully updated and relevant Evacuation Plan. Concurrent activities can occur with inputs from Tantallon Wildfire Report, Westwood Hills Report, Planning, Research (e.g. DalTRAC) and engaging affected communities.
12. EM Project Tracking Platform – **Execution:** Project board has been set up on EM Teams channel.
13. Review HRM EM Positions - **Initiated:** This will be scoped into the EM Strat-Plan.
14. Establish Document Control that Conforms to EMAP - **Execution:** EM file architecture has been established on SharePoint. The framework complies with EMAP requirements.
15. Emergency Communications Solutions Strategy (ECSS) - **Execution:** EM providing input from EM lens through the established working group.
16. Integration of Ground Search and Rescue - **Execution:** Service level agreement with the different regional GSARs is expected to be completed April 2025.

Overview of the Municipal Crisis Communications Plan

Approved in September 2024 by the Emergency Management Committee, the Municipal Crisis Communications Plan (MCCP) provides a comprehensive framework for the Halifax Regional Municipality to manage communications during emergencies and crises.

The plan ensures that communications are timely, accurate and coordinated across internal and external audiences. The plan is grounded in recent experiences such as Hurricane Fiona (2022) and the Tantallon Wildfire (May/June 2023) and has been tested through recent events including the identification of and response to picric acid exposure at the Bedford Institute of Oceanography (. It applies to all municipal staff and is activated when a crisis exceeds the scope of a single business unit. The plan defines clear roles, responsibilities, and protocols and integrates with the broader emergency management structure including

the Incident Command System and supporting Corporate Communications standard operating procedures such as the Emergency Communications Playbook. Key components to the MCCP include:

- That the CAO is identified as the authority to activate the MCCP, except in situations where an immediate threat is identified by Halifax Regional Police, RCMP or Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency.
- Establishing three key objectives for the MCCP:
 1. Provide a communications framework with clear protocols and tools.
 2. Define communications as essential to crisis management.
 3. Clarify roles and responsibilities during a crisis.
- Identifies seven guiding principles to crisis communications:
 1. Be first and timely – Acknowledge issues early (even if only to confirm an occurrence) and provide regular updates and when to expect them.
 2. Be accurate and transparent – Share only confirmed information.
 3. Be clear and use plain language – Avoid jargon and ensure accessibility.
 4. Be direct and action-oriented – Clearly state what actions are needed.
 5. Be empathetic and trauma-informed – Respect the experiences of affected audiences.
 6. Be accessible – Use inclusive, multi-channel communication.
 7. Be concise – Focus on essential information and next steps.

In addition to these core elements, the MCCP includes a crisis response timeline which provides a framework for responding within the first 60 minutes of a crisis being identified including: acknowledging the issue to appropriate audiences, leveraging appropriate channels to share information and establishing a schedule for further updates if required. Furthermore, criteria and guidelines for use of the provincial Alert Ready system and the municipality's hfxALERT and Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registry (VVPR) are provided.

The MCCP is designed to be a living document and will be updated regularly following activations or otherwise reviewed annually.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No financial implications at this time.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

N/A

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Section 3b of the Terms of Reference of the Executive Standing Committee, which states that the Committee "shall advise the Council on the development of Emergency Management plans and present the Municipal Emergency Management Plans to the Council."

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 Emergency Management Program Charter
- Attachment 2 The Municipal Crisis Communications Plan

Program Charter

Community Safety

Emergency Management

Version Number: 1.0

Date of Last Update: March 2025

Program Charter

HRM Emergency Management Program

Community Safety | Emergency Management

1.0 PROGRAM			
Program Name	HRM Emergency Management Program		
Description	Update and renew the current HRM EM program to adhere to a best practice standard		
Sponsor	Cathie O'Toole, HRM CAO		
Program Champion	Bill Moore, Commissioner of Public Safety		
Program Manager	Colin Waddell		
Program Team Resources	Name TBD	Role TBD	
Program Budget	Community Safety Annual Operating and Capital Budgets		
Prepared By	Colin Waddell	Emergency Management Program Manager	March 2025
Recommended By	Bill Moore	Commissioner of Public Safety	17 March 2025
Approved By	Cathie O'Toole	Chief Administrative Officer	20 March 2025
		Emergency Management Planning Committee	

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

Under the auspices of the Commissioner of Public Safety, and the Executive Director of Community Safety, the Office of Emergency Management is undergoing renewal, and enhancement efforts to meet emergency management industry standards, (e.g. Emergency Management Accreditation Program, (EMAP).

Most emergencies in HRM are local in nature and are managed by municipal resources. Moreover, accumulating risks associated with factors such as increased urbanization, critical infrastructure dependencies and interdependencies, terrorism, climate change, environmental change, animal and human diseases and the heightened movement of people and goods around the world have increased the potential for various types of catastrophes. Such events could transcend geographic boundaries to challenge municipal emergency management, including response.

Strengthening resilience to natural and human-induced hazards and disasters requires contributions from all-of-society, coordinated by strong and effective leadership from HRM government, and as required support from the provincial and federal governments. New and evolving technologies present opportunities for HRM, Indigenous peoples, communities, academia, volunteer and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and individuals to strengthen HRM's collective ability to better prevent/mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

3.0 PROGRAM GOAL

The over-arching goal of the HRM Emergency Management Program is to establish an all-Hazard EM program that supports legal and policy frameworks, programs, activities, standards, and other measures to enable HRM staff, partners, and the whole-of-society to work in better collaboration to keep HRM safe.

4.0 PROGRAM VISION

The program vision is the development of a best practice approach to emergency management that can be modernized, and adapted, to gain efficiencies in operations and expertise related to mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, which are the four pillars of emergency management.

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5.0 BUSINESS REASONS FOR PROGRAM

The ultimate purpose of emergency management is to save lives, preserve the environment and protect property and the economy. Natural disasters, pandemics, cyber incidents, and terrorism can all cause emergencies in HRM and can quickly escalate in scope and severity, cross jurisdictional lines and take on international dimensions.

A comprehensive and effective Emergency Management Program can save lives, preserve the environment, and protect property by raising the understanding of risks and contributing to a safer, prosperous, sustainable, disaster resistant and resilient community.

HRM Mayor and Council directed the CAO through the Community Safety and Emergency Management Business Unit to renew the HRM EM program to ensure an effective, efficient, and coordinated emergency management planning and response for HRM.

The primary benefit to the Municipality is the coordinated establishment of modern emergency management, using a defensible methodology, resilient human capacities, and infrastructure, designed to account for climate impacts and future uncertainty, while providing a service for internal business units, affected groups, and any applicable external agency or partners.

6.0 GOVERNANCE AND ROLES

- The program sponsor will be the Chief Administrative Officer of the Halifax Regional Municipality.
- The program champion will be the Commissioner of public Safety.
- Documents produced for approval will be submitted in an interim form to the Emergency Management Planning Committee for approval. Documents will subsequently be presented to the Executive Standing Committee for endorsement, and when appropriate, to the Mayor and Council.
- As required, the program may establish a strategic working group(s) salient to each project under the Emergency Management Program.
- As Required, the program may establish individual project charters, to formally initiate project(s), under the Emergency Management Program. Project items may appear as an addendum to this document.
- Version control will be maintained for each project via a dedicated SharePoint site. This will provide accountability and transparency for audit purposes.
- The charter will be reviewed and updated as needed with formal review at the Emergency Management Planning Committee on an annual basis to ensure strategic alignment with municipal priorities including fiscal considerations.

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7.0 Program Scope

The HRM Emergency Management Program Charter is being created to give strategic guidance to the portfolio of projects undertaken by the Emergency Management Office under the direction of the Executive Director of Community Safety.

The Charter is intended to be a living document and amended as necessary.

The scope of the program includes the following objectives:

1. Develop program charter to provide strategic direction and scope for projects within the emergency management program.
2. Ensure a best practice approach to EM program design, development, and implementation.
3. Develop and implement a Multi-Year Strategic Plan for Emergency Management.
4. Develop and implement a HRM Hazard Risk Vulnerability Assessment.
5. Develop a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP).
6. Provide Emergency Management contextual information and consult on the Continuity of Government (COG) Plan.
7. Assist in the development of Business Continuity Plans for each Business Unit.
8. Develop and implement Emergency Coordination Centre “Concept of Operations”.
9. Develop and implement a Resource Management Plan.
10. Oversee, coordinate and complete the development of Business Unit Emergency Management Plans.
11. Create corporate wide EM training and Exercise plan.
12. Update HRM Evacuation Plan.
13. Provide strategic direction and input for the Emergency Communications Solutions Strategy (ECSS).
14. Support the development of the HRM Situational Awareness platform through the provision of EM priorities.
15. Incorporate HalifACT 2050 Climate Action plan (23 June, 2020) specific actions assigned to HRM Emergency Management.
16. Develop and implement a comprehensive Emergency Management document filing and information retrieval system.
17. Develop Emergency Management Communication Plan for internal partners or affected groups.
18. Lead integration of Ground Search & Rescue teams into HRM business processes.
19. Develop operational frameworks for Joint Emergency Management (JEM) teams to enhance HRM integration.
20. Develop operational frameworks for amateur radio groups to enhance HRM integration.

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8.0 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

An effective emergency management program is built on several key principles that ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach to preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies and disasters. The following principles shall be used in the development of HRM's EM products, services, and plans:

1. Comprehensive Approach

- All-Hazards Perspective: The program should address a wide range of potential hazards, including natural, technological, and human-caused events.
- Phases of Emergency Management: It should encompass all phases, prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery.

2. Risk Management

- Hazard, Risk, Vulnerability Analysis (HRVA): Regularly assess and identify risks and vulnerabilities within the community or organization to prioritize resources and efforts effectively.
- Prevention and Mitigation: Implement strategies to prevent or reduce the impact of identified risks.
- Align risk management approaches with HRM Enterprise Risk Management program

3. Coordination and Collaboration

- Interagency Coordination: Foster cooperation among various agencies, organizations, and affected groups at the local, provincial, federal and First Nations levels.
- Public-Private Partnerships: Engage with the private sector, non-profits, and community organizations to enhance resource availability and capability.

4. Scalability and Flexibility

- Adaptability: The program should be flexible enough to scale its operations based on the severity and scope of an emergency.
- Modular Response: Use a modular system (such as ICS) that allows for efficient deployment of resources and personnel.

5. Public Engagement and Communication

- Public Education: Educate the public about risks, emergency procedures, and preparedness strategies.
- Clear and Consistent Communication: Ensure timely and accurate communication with the public before, during, and after an emergency.

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6. Planning and Preparedness

- Emergency Plans: Develop and regularly update comprehensive emergency plans that outline roles, responsibilities, and procedures.
- Training and Exercises: Regularly conduct training sessions and exercises to ensure readiness and identify areas for improvement.

7. Resource Management

- Logistics and Supply Chain: Maintain a well-organized system for resource procurement, management, and distribution during an emergency.
- Mutual Aid Agreements: Establish mutual aid agreements with neighboring jurisdictions or organizations to share resources during a crisis.

8. Business Continuity Plans (BCP)

- BCPs: Develop and maintain Business Continuity Plans to ensure that essential functions can continue during and after a disaster.
- Redundancy: Implement redundancy in critical systems and infrastructure to minimize disruptions

9. Leadership and Authority

- Clear Command Structure: Establish a clear chain of command and delineate authority for decision-making during emergencies.
- Empowerment: Empower leaders and personnel at all levels to take decisive action within the framework of the emergency plan.

10. Recovery Planning

- Short-term and Long-term Recovery: Plan for both immediate recovery needs and long-term rebuilding and revitalization efforts.
- Community Resilience: Focus on building resilience in the community to better withstand future emergencies.

11. Continuous Improvement

- After-Action Reviews: Conduct thorough reviews after each incident to identify lessons learned and areas for improvement.
- Ongoing Evaluation: Regularly evaluate and update the emergency management program to incorporate new information, technology, and practice.

12. Equity and Inclusiveness

- Vulnerable Populations: Ensure that the needs of vulnerable and underserved populations are addressed in all phases of emergency management.
- Inclusive Planning: Engage diverse community of affected groups and partners in the planning process to ensure that the program is inclusive and equitable.

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9.0 Key Program Deliverables		
Name & Item #	Description	Responsible Person
1. Emergency Management Program Charter	Develop program charter to provide strategic direction and scope for projects within the emergency management program	EM Program Manager
2. Best practice approach to Emergency Management.	Design program based on an approved standard for emergency management to ensure program design, development, and implementation that fosters excellence and accountability in emergency management	Commissioner of Public Safety / EM Director / EM Program Manager
3. Emergency Management Strategic Plan	Create an Emergency Management Strategic plan to provide strategic guidance for Emergency Management	Commissioner of Public Safety / EM Director
4. HRM Hazard Risk Vulnerability Assessment	Update HRM Hazard Risk Vulnerability Assessment Tool and conduct a hazard summary and risk assessment.	Commissioner of Public Safety / EM Director
5. Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)	Create a CEMP to provide the structure and operational direction for emergency management in HRM.	Commissioner of Public Safety / EM Director
6. Continuity of Government Plan (COG)	Establish defined procedures for all HRM governmental body to continue essential operations in the event of an emergency	Legal & Legislative Services / Commissioner of Public Safety / EM Director
7. Business Continuity Plans	Assist in the development of Business Continuity Plans for each Business Unit	Commissioner of Public Safety / EM Director / Business Unit Directors
8. Concept for Emergency Management Coordination	Create a concept of operations (con-ops) for the Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) and communicate to all HRM BUs and affected groups.	Commissioner of Public Safety / EM Director
9. Resource Management Plan	Create a resource management plan to provide a systematic process of identifying, acquiring,	Commissioner of Public Safety /

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	allocating, and managing resources to ensure the success of the Emergency Management program.	EM Director / Commissioner of Public Works / Finance and Asset Management
10. Business Unit Emergency Management Plans	Assist the development of emergency plans for HRM BUs to ensure compliance with Municipal Bylaw E-100.	Commissioner of Public Safety / EM Director
11. Corporate EM Training and Exercise Plan	Create a training matrix for EM and municipal business units that are compatible with the emergency management program.	Commissioner of Public Safety / Executive Director Community Safety / EM Director
12. HRM Evacuation Plan	Review and update community egress mapping, as broken down by focus areas in HRVA, informed by DalTRAC work, and Westwood Hills Report.	Commissioner of Public Safety / EM Director / ECC Director / Executive Director Planning & Development
13. Emergency Communications Solutions Strategy (ECSS)	Participate in the strategic working group	EM Director / EM Program Manager / Emergency Management Administrator
14. Situational Awareness	Creation of a common operating platform that can be utilized by EM in the event of emergencies. EM to provide input when requested.	Commissioner of Operations / Executive Director ICT
15. HalifACT 2050 Climate Action Plan	HalifACT 2050 Climate Action plan assigned specific actions to HRM Emergency Management that require a comprehensive program approach for implementation. These are related directly to the listed projects in sections 7 & 9.	Commissioner of Public Safety / EM Director
16. Comprehensive filing and information retrieval system	Develop and implement a comprehensive Emergency Management document filing and information retrieval system.	Commissioner of Public Safety / EM Director
17. Emergency Management Communication Plan	Deliver engagement plan to identify and consult with appropriate affected groups and interested parties to solicit commitment to the Emergency Management Program	Commissioner of Public Safety / EM Director

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18.Integration of Ground Search & Rescue (GSAR)	Establish business processes, such as funding and service level to support the integration of (GSAR)	Executive Director Community Safety / EM Director
19.JEM Operational Frameworks	Create standard operating frameworks to establish consistent service delivery	Executive Director Community Safety / EM Director
20.Amatuer Radio Operational Frameworks	Create standard operating frameworks to establish consistent service delivery	Executive Director Community Safety / EM Director

10.0 Constraints (Things you must do)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency Management Program will operate under current organizational structure and operational budgetary constraints.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Derive executive strategic intent for Emergency Management including vision and mission.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a defensible methodology around the implementation of an emergency management framework.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure accountability by clearly defining roles and responsibilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish formalized document and decision approval process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake review and optimization of Emergency Management organizational structure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a comprehensive document framework that shows the genesis of the program, originating documents, and subsequent projects.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alignment with Halifax Regional Municipality Strategic Plan, HalifACT, and Enterprise Risk Management in terms of context, language, and definitions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with known affected groups on matters related to program and project management.

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10.0 Restraints (Things you must NOT do)
Act unilaterally to implement emergency management plans and approaches
Disregard coordination function of EM and become an operational business unit
Undertake projects that do not align with the Emergency Management Program

11.0 Program Milestone Dates – Initiation, Planning, Execution, Monitoring and Control, and Closure			
Item #	Name	Event	Current Phase / Date
1	Emergency Management Program Charter	Endorsement of the Program Charter by CAO and Approval of the charter program by the Emergency Planning Committee	Initiation / Feb 2025
2	Best practice approach to Emergency Management.	Build Emergency Management program elements to align with an approved standard for emergency management such as “The emergency Management accreditation program (EMAP)”	TBD / TBD
3	Emergency Management Strategic Plan	Input from CAO on requirements and vision for EM Strategic Plan	Initiation / Feb 2025
3	Emergency Management Strategic Plan	Create Project Charter for the Emergency Management Strategic Plan	Initiation / TBD
3	Emergency Management Strategic Plan	Tracking dashboard to assist with an overall view of timelines, project champions and project dependencies/relationships.	Initiation / Feb 2025

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3	Emergency Management Strategic Plan	Hold Vision, Mission, Goals and Objective workshops with established strategic working group	TBD / TBD
4	HRM Hazard Risk Vulnerability Assessment	Update GIS database & HRVA platform	Execution / Feb 2025
4	HRM Hazard Risk Vulnerability Assessment	Review list of critical infrastructure for accuracy and appropriateness	Execution / Feb 2025
5	Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)	Create Project Charter for development of the CEMP	TBD / TBD
5	Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)	Implement concept for emergency management to be adopted by HRM	TBD / TBD
6.	Continuity of Government Plan	EM to review finalized continuity of government plan	TBD / TBD
7	Business Continuity Plans	Complete Interim BCPs for all Business Units.	Execution / Mar 2025

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8	Concept for Emergency Management Coordination	Following completion of the CEMP, identify user needs and system capabilities	TBD / TBD
8	Concept for Emergency Management Coordination	Define Roles and Responsibilities for ECC management and organization	TBD / TBD
9	Resource Management Plan	Create project charter for resource plan after HRVA and CEMP completion. Conduct assessment of Resource Management Plan requirements	TBD / TBD
10	Business Unit Emergency Management Plans	Create Template for BU Emergency management plans as part of CEMP. Create EM plans for Halifax Fire, TPW & Parks and Rec as first priorities.	TBD / TBD
11	Corporate EM Training and Exercise Plan	Develop and Implement Interim HRM EM Training and Exercise Plan	Initiation / Feb 2025
12	HRM Evacuation Plan	Update plan concurrently with HRVA completion, and Westwood hills information.	Initiation / TBD
13	Emergency Communications Solutions Strategy (ECSS)	Participate in strategic working group to provide EM input	Execution / Feb 2025
14	Situational Awareness	Monitor development of common operating platform via EM planning committee updates	TBD / TBD
15	HalifACT 2050 Climate Action plan	Actions assigned to EM are integrated in HRVA, Evacuation Plans, ECSS, Resource Management Plan, and Training and Exercise Plan; as listed in sections 7 & 9.	Initiation / Feb 2025

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16	Comprehensive filing and information retrieval system	Create architecture for document management system that adheres to emergency management industry standards (EMAP) with CIM	Planning / Feb 2025
17	Emergency Management Communication Plan	Presentation roadshow to inform, generate interest, and increase awareness of the EM program	Initiation / TBD
18	Integration of GSAR	Create service level agreement with the regional GSARs	Execution / Mar 2025
18	Integration of GSAR	Establish funding model for regional GSARs	Planning / Mar 2025
19	JEM Operational Frameworks	Create standard operational guidelines	TBD / TBD
20	Create standard operating frameworks to establish consistent service delivery	Create service level agreement with the amateur radio groups with finance framework	TBD / TBD

12 Program Assumptions

The following assumptions have been made in documenting this charter

- Steady and predictable funding
- Staff made available to program and projects from other BU's
- Capacity exists for projects to be undertaken concurrently as opposed to sequentially both internally to EM
- EM remains a corporate long-term priority for the municipality.

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13 Program Risks

As a program of multi-discipline projects, the program has many inherent risks and factors critical to success. At present, the program has yet to be initiated and structured and has not proceeded through a formal risk evaluation. Additionally, the specific projects of the program shall contain their own set of risks and factors that are included in the program. In principle, the risks allocated to the program are consistent with other large undertakings, scoping, scheduling and budget. This will require further refinement as the program unfolds.

Description	Probability (Low, Medium, High)	Severity (Low, Medium, High)	Mitigation
Funding cuts	Medium	High	Source other funding sources (federal, provincial). align planning with resource allocation.
Staff assistance from other BU not available	Low	High	Hire services or skills externally. Review resource plan and ensure accuracy and relevance to current state. Engage program sponsor to restate priority to senior leadership
Competing programs and priorities	Low	High	Regular reporting, (coms plan). Keeping program/project sponsor/s up-to date.
Business units enacting plans that have EM components without some form of EM review/input.	Medium	Medium	Make ELT aware of potential intersection with EM program. Internal communications plan.

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			Processes and systems that integrate EM (duty officer)
Change in Municipal Government	Medium	Medium	EM orientation program. Council to be part of training/exercises.
Competing Provincial Emergency Management priorities or approaches	Medium	High	Ensure Municipal and business unit representation at appropriate levels of provincial government
Change in Provincial legislation governing Emergency Management.	High	High	Participate in consultation with municipal government and best align existing municipal strategic priorities for EM
Reputational Risk: failure to deliver	Medium	High	Expectation Management, relationship building. Program schedule
Emergencies consume resources and staff	Medium	High	Develop extra capacity in EM to enable sustained staffing during emergency events to minimise the impact programme items; training and exercises for staff within Community Safety and other BUs

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Loss of Staff	Medium	Medium	<p>Develop standard policies and procedures that capture tacit knowledge.</p> <p>Adhere to document and record management system including retention schedules.</p> <p>Develop redundancy and resiliency by training sufficient staff to absorb the impact of cyclical turnover</p>
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14 Communications

Internal Audiences

- Council – about the program, updated through information reports via the Executive Standing Committee.
- Executive Standing Committee- report twice a year (February and September)
- All EDs through the EM committee (standing agenda item).
- Corporate Communications
- Employee Messages- Newsletters, email through coordinators.
- Emergency Management Staff- briefings, emails, etc.
- Volunteer Community- meetings, briefings, emails.

External Audiences (if applicable)

- Public Safety Canada
- Federal Agencies: DND, Parks Canada, Coastguard etc.
- First Nations
- African Nova Scotia Community
- Province of Nova Scotia
- Organizations with MOUs

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- Critical infrastructure partners: Halifax Water, Nova Scotia Power etc.
- Citizens and Businesses.
- Disaster response organizations.
- Other Municipalities in Nova Scotia
- Joint Rescue Coordination Centre

Potential Interested Parties / Communications objectives / Milestones

- It is important to note that scope of engagement and communication is focused on the raising awareness and soliciting buy in to the enhanced emergency management program while highlighting the value of an all-hazards methodology to everyday business practices.

15 Program Criteria for Success

The program will be successful when;

- When the four pillars of emergency management, mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, are embedded in all HRM business units.
- When there is compliance to EMAP standards.
- When goals are accomplished.
- Municipal business units have emergency response plans.
- Business continuity planning is carried consistently in all HRM BUs
- Predictable level of service established for emergency response via EMO.
- Sufficient number of individuals in HRM have participated in the training and exercise plan so as to feel competent when involved in emergency response.
- Enough staff are trained and competent to ensure capacity during multi-day, or multi-week, emergency response events.
- EM considerations and integration are clearly evident in the business processes across all business units.
- EM principles are considered when developing strategic documents, plans, and policies.
- EM staff are consulted and included in corporate decision making where there is a need.

16 Signoff, Proceed with Planning/Execution (as applicable to the next stage)

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17 Program Manager's Authority Limits

The program manager has the authority to create relevant project charters arising from the EM program if it is:

- Consistent with the stated priorities for EM or senior leadership
- Within the allocated budget of the EM program
- Follows the applicable procurement policies.
- Adheres to the stated governance structure for the EM program.
- Conforms with the applicable signing authority.
- Recommend specific actions to the program sponsor pertaining to the EM program or related projects.

Municipal Crisis Communications Plan

Prepared and maintained by:

Corporate Communications

With input, feedback and collaboration of the Emergency
Management Committee

Last revised:

October 2024



HALIFAX

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Purpose and scope

This Municipal Crisis Communications Plan (“the Plan”) is intended to serve as a communications framework to guide the Halifax Regional Municipality through effective crisis communications with employees, residents, media and other key partners. Drawing from the previous edition (2017) of the Plan, this is a living document to be reviewed and updated annually by Corporate Communications based on new programs and tools, as well as past experiences/incidents. As changes are made, the revised plan will be circulated to the Emergency Management Committee for endorsement and then shared with internal contacts for awareness. It contains both the principles and foundations for effective crisis communications as well as tools, templates, supporting documentation, protocols and checklists for use during a crisis. It also reflects insights from experience with recent crisis situations such as the response to COVID-19, Hurricane Fiona in 2022 and the Tantallon Wildfire in 2023.

It is important to note that the scope of the Plan is strictly focused on communications during a crisis or emergency. The Plan does not include situations when a single business unit responds to an emergency. Examples include, Halifax Regional Fire & Emergency (HRFE) responding to a structure fire or medical emergency, or Halifax Regional Police (HRP) responding to a vehicle accident or criminal code violation. Those business units already have well-established communications practices to address these situations and while the communications approach will align with the Plan, the individual business units are responsible for the associated communications efforts, not Corporate Communications. Where deemed required by HRFE/HRP, they may engage Corporate Communications to ensure awareness and request support.

The Plan deals with situations when the scope and scale require multiple business units to be involved and a decision is made by the Chief Administrative Office (CAO) to activate this plan.

For details regarding the municipality’s operational response to a crisis or emergency please refer to the [Municipal Emergency Management Plan \(2017\)](#).

Objectives

There are three key objectives of the Plan:

1. Provide a communications framework that ensures adequate resources and clear communications protocols and tools are in place to communicate effectively and expediently with all external and internal audiences during and following a crisis.
2. Define the role of communications as essential to the overall crisis management approach.
3. Ensure clear lines of communications responsibilities and roles during a crisis.

Application

This plan applies to the Administration and all staff of the municipality.

Authority

The decision to activate crisis communications protocols will be made by the CAO, except for situations where there is an immediate threat from an active aggressor, or a lockdown initiated by HRP, RCMP or HRFE.

Communications managers and/or members of the senior leadership team will advise the CAO of the escalation of an issue that may deem it to be considered a crisis situation. The CAO will determine if a crisis situation exists, thereby initiating crisis communications support by way of the Plan.

Definitions

Issues, crises and emergencies are terms that are often used interchangeably; however, it is important to note that they are not the same.

Issue

An issue is an emerging, routine or current problem, event or trend that could affect the organization and its reputation. While they can be relatively minor in scope, an issue can develop into an emergency or a crisis, depending on the circumstances. Communications support to issues often involves lower-level, operational and/or tactical planning, however the principles of this crisis communications plan can also apply to issues management.

Emergency

Emergencies are situations, often dangerous, that require prompt action – sometimes beyond normal procedures – to limit impacts to people, property or the environment (e.g. serious vehicle collision, structure fire, severe winter storm, IT systems failure/cyber attack, etc.) Issues may evolve into emergencies if the situation escalates or in the example of a threat to reputation there is a perception the municipality lacks control over the situation.

Crisis

A crisis is a significant event, often escalated from an existing issue or emergency, that threatens life, property or the environment (e.g. hurricane, unanticipated impacts of severe weather, flooding, wildfire, etc.) and impacts the municipality's ability to deliver services, carry on with routine business or achieve strategic objectives. A crisis may also develop from issues that may not pose a serious threat to life, property or environment but may evolve from matters involving values, safety, security or the integrity of the municipal government.

Refer to Appendix A for a detailed explanation of the differences between issues management and crisis management, as they are also terms that are often incorrectly used interchangeably.

Types of Crises

When considering crises and the types that may impact our organization, they can generally be grouped into the following seven categories:

1. **Infrastructure** – those crises which impact the status of infrastructure within the Halifax region, including that which is owned and operated by the municipality and that which is not; both would require direction and response from the municipality. Crises involving infrastructure include, but are not limited to, collapse of a building; collapse of roads, highways, bridges; a ferry sinking; large scale power failures; arsons of major infrastructure, natural gas explosion, etc.
2. **Fire** – those crises caused by fire that largely impact the infrastructure and/or terrain of the Halifax region. These fires may be man-made, whether accidental or intentional, or natural in origin. This would encompass arsons and forest fires with significant implications to our community.
3. **Public health** – those crises caused by complex health issues that affect the health of people in our community, including, but not limited to, a pandemic, wide-spread food poisoning such as *E. coli*, etc.
4. **Death/serious injuries** – those crises involving the death of or serious injury to an employee/contracted employee and/or the death of or serious injury to a resident related to municipal property or assets, including, but not limited to, crashes or collisions involving a transit bus, police car, fire truck, snow plow or other vehicle which is part of the municipal fleet; a ferry sinking; an on-duty employee or resident drowning at an municipal pool; municipally-owned building collapsing, etc.
5. **Mass casualty** – those crises involving mass death in our community, including but not limited to mass shootings, wildfires, a pandemic, bombings, release of noxious substances, airline disaster, etc.
6. **Natural disaster** – those crises which are caused by the natural processes of the earth which significantly impact our residents, our community and/or our infrastructure, including, but not limited to, floods/tsunamis, hurricanes/storms, forest fires, blizzards, etc.
7. **CBRNE** – those crises involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive (CBRNE) incidents, which will impact lives, the environment and/or property. CBRNE incidents can be weaponized or non-weaponized, accidental or intentional.

It is important to recognize that these categories may not necessarily exist in isolation as one crisis could encompass several of the above categories or lead to further crises as the situation unfolds. For example, a CBRNE crisis could quickly become a public health crisis as well as a mass casualty crisis.

Communications principles in a crisis

Whether an issue or a crisis, communicating in times of urgency requires consistency. To ensure this consistency, the following principles are provided to guide the municipality's communications activities during a crisis:

- **Be first and provide timely updates.**

Audiences want to know who to rely on in a crisis. Being first, even if only to acknowledge an emerging matter and advise when the next update will be shared, helps reassure audiences where and when they will find credible information about the matter. To be effective, this first and timely approach must be applied consistently and leverage multiple mediums and channels to ensure reach. This includes ensuring functions such as 311 agents and social media administrators within the municipality are adequately resourced to support.

- **Be accurate and transparent.**

Accuracy and transparency of communications is critical to reassuring and building trust with audiences. There is no room for speculative or otherwise unconfirmed information when communicating in a crisis, and such messaging will erode audience trust. When combined with being first and providing timely updates, accuracy and transparency may mean confirming that some information remains unknown. Incident command and municipal leadership must embrace such an approach, ensuring streamlined flow and approval of information that is rooted in the Incident Command System structure.

- **Be clear and use plain language.**

Clarity of message and avoiding jargon, abbreviations, acronyms and technical language will ensure audiences understand the matter at hand and what may be required of them. It also promotes effective two-way communication and the amplification of critical details (increasing audience reach) through accessible words and presentation of information that is easy to understand, share or interact with.

- **Be direct and provide meaningful actions people can take.**

Communications activities should clearly establish actions audiences are required to take. If communicating for awareness only, the message and channels used to share it must clearly indicate this, while messages requiring a change of action by specific audiences should be targeted to those who need to know.

•	<p>Be empathetic, respectful and trauma informed.</p> <p>Acknowledging the situation and its impacts on different audiences is critical. Communications activities must be respectful of the experience the intended audiences are living through and must allow space for two-way interaction that builds understanding. Such approaches can be resource intensive, and municipal employees operating in such environments must be adequately prepared (e.g. training) and resourced (e.g. sufficient positions for multiple shifts, post incident supports) to fulfill this principle.</p>
•	<p>Be accessible and meet audiences where they are.</p> <p>Ensuring audiences can connect with the organization continues to foster trust, while communications activities must be able to adapt to the needs of audiences most impacted (e.g. language, accessibility, commonly used communications tools and channels, etc.)</p>
•	<p>Be concise.</p> <p>When possible, and in balance with all other principles, communications should be concise, emphasizing the most important information audiences need to know and the next-step actions they may need to take.</p>

How these principles are operationalized can be seen in Appendix B, and further exemplified through the Corporate Communications Emergency Communications Playbook outlined in Appendix E.

Audiences

It is integral to define and reach out to audiences as early as possible in a crisis.

It is logical to immediately consider external audiences during a crisis, such as residents, transit users, business owners, visitors, other orders of government and government agencies, aid groups, etc. However, internal audiences must also be considered a primary audience.

The audiences for crisis communications vary by crisis but can be grouped as follows:

Internal audiences

Need to know – employees and other internal groups that are directly impacted by the crisis and/or require immediate initial information and timely updates to respond effectively to the crisis and work with external audiences who are impacted.

Want to know – employees and other internal groups that are seeking information about the crisis but are not directly impacted by it.

External audiences

Need to know – external individuals, groups and/or organizations, whether private or public, that are directly impacted by the crisis and require immediate initial information and timely updates to respond effectively to the crisis.

Want to know – external individuals, groups and/or organizations, whether private or public, such as neighbours or other orders of government, that are seeking information about the crisis but are not directly impacted by it.

Audience contact lists

Contact lists for key internal and external audiences will be maintained through the following:

- **Critical infrastructure and partners** – Contact lists for organizations essential to the operational response during emergency management scenarios will be maintained by the municipality's Emergency Management Division.
- **Municipal and provincial key communications contacts** – Contact lists for critical for coordination of communications activities within the municipality and provincial government contacts will be maintained by the municipality's Corporate Communications Division.

Key considerations for internal and external audiences

When addressing both groups of internal and external audiences, crisis communications must consider:

Internal

- What the administration needs to know to take decisive action to address the crisis;
- What employees directly involved in the crisis need to know in order to take swift action and/or respond effectively; and,
- What the Mayor and Regional Council need to know in order to respond effectively to the concerns of their residents and others, and to assist in sharing reliable information through their networks.

Internal and External

- What employees and residents need to know so they have confidence in the organization's ability to manage the crisis at hand and also how the crisis will impact their work. It is also important to note that a well-informed internal audience can contribute to effective external messaging; and
- When do audiences need to know the information, as well as the cadence of informing them, including sharing that cadence with the audiences.

Standard Audiences List

To be adapted as needed, these audience lists will vary depending on the scope and scale of any given crisis. For example, in the case of a hold and secure order at a municipal facility, many internal and external audiences (beyond those immediately impacted and/or required to respond) will not receive communications regarding the situation.

Internal Need-to-Know Audiences:

- CAO
- Mayor
- Regional Council, with a particular focus on the area councillor(s), as needed
- Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and key staff identified by the ELT
- Incident Response Team – senior leaders and assigned staff with responsibility and accountability for addressing the incident and reporting on status
- Communications team – will comprise intra-agency representatives from Corporate Communications, HRP, Halifax Water and/or others as necessary
- First responders, including Integrated Emergency Services – 911 dispatch
- The municipal Emergency Management Division
- 311 staff

Internal Want-to-Know Audiences:

- Senior Management Team
- Other employees not directly impacted by the crisis
- Unions
- Oversight boards

External Need-to-Know Audiences:

- Affected residents
- Media – local, national and international, depending on the situation
- Affected Member(s) of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) and Member(s) of Parliament (MP)
- Provincial Emergency Management Organization
- Affected provincial and/or federal government departments/agencies (e.g. Department of Community Services, Department of Natural Resources and Renewables, Health Canada, Department of National Defence, Natural Resources Canada, etc.)
- Affected organizations (e.g. Halifax Regional Centre for Education, Halifax Port Authority, etc.)
- Affected businesses
- Affected business commissions/associations
- Affected community groups/associations
- Nova Scotia Health Authority (e.g. hospitals)

External Want-to-Know Audiences:

- Residents not directly impacted by the crisis

- MLAs and government representatives not directly impacted by the crisis
- Businesses and business commissions/associations not affected by the crisis
- Agencies within bordering jurisdictions which you may need to rely on for aid/support
- Residents outside of the municipality, including Nova Scotians and Canadians, depending on the situation

Communications tools

The municipality has many different communications tools at its disposal, but some will be better suited to communicate with audiences during a crisis. It is important to use a combination of communications tools that help reach the internal and external ‘need to know’ audiences as effectively and efficiently as possible. While the ‘want to know’ audiences are secondary in a crisis, it is beneficial to reach them with timely and accurate information to fill a potential communication void and/or minimize the spreading of misinformation in a crisis.

Types of public notifications

It is also important to note that there are a number of different types of public notifications that can be used during a crisis situation. These include:

- **Hazard risk notifications** – typically issued in advance of extreme weather events or other hazards posing a moderate risk to the community or critical infrastructure. These notifications may provide or link to preparedness instructions that provide information or voluntary directions to residents such as limiting travel, remaining in present location or temporary lodging facilities or other details for those who may wish to relocate (i.e. voluntary evacuation);
- **State of local emergency** – a legal mechanism that provides the municipal government with higher level of intergovernmental coordination, access to emergency discretionary funds, the ability to mobilize additional supports, organizations and businesses to support residents. States of local emergency is declared by the Mayor and defined under the provincial [Emergency Management Act](#);
- **Shelter in place** – typically issued due to specific hazards that may require residents to remain in their current location as evacuating or moving for their location may increase their risk of mortality, injury or sickness. Shelter in place may be voluntary (e.g. implied via hazard risk notification) or mandatory;
- **Evacuation notifications** – issued when there is potential risk to life, safety and health due to an emergency and vacating the area is a best option to preserve life, safety and health. Evacuation notifications may be voluntary (e.g. via hazard risk notification) and include the following types:
 - **Evacuation alert** – when an event or hazard poses an extreme risk to community and potential for evacuation order is significant;
 - **Evacuation order** – when event or hazard poses imminent risk; and,
- **Rescind notices** – issued as required when there is no longer a risk to life, safety and health.

Communications tools, audiences and frequency

The communications tools that are available to the municipality during a crisis include, but are not limited, to the following:

Internal communications tools

Communications Tool	Audience/Details	Frequency
Face-to-face meetings	<p>Internal need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>Includes Mayor and Regional Council/senior leaders/employees and is determined by how quickly the situation is unfolding.</p>	As needed.
Phone/virtual calls	<p>Internal need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>Includes Mayor and Regional Council/senior leaders/employees and is determined by how quickly the situation is unfolding.</p>	As needed.
Emails	<p>Internal need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>Includes Regional Council/senior leaders/employees and will contain updates on the situation and the municipality's response. Can include all-staff emails from the CAO and/or a sample email that senior leaders can use to inform the employees of their BUs.</p> <p>It is noted that not all municipal employees have regular access to email so the internal communications tools listed above are key to keeping those with limited electronic access informed.</p>	Typically, within one hour of the situation being deemed a crisis by the CAO, and usually once a day until the crisis has ended. Frequency is likely to be more than once a day at outset and reduced to daily or 2-3/week for a prolonged situation.

Internal communications tools

Communications Tool	Audience/Details	Frequency
Question & Answer (Q&A) document	<p>Internal need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>Developed by Corporate Communications, in consultation with key business units, the Q&A document consists of potential questions that could be asked of the municipality concerning the crisis as well as the proposed answers.</p> <p>The information in the Q&A can be used to shape the other communications tools on this list.</p>	As needed and updated regularly as new information is received and/or questions are asked by internal and/or external audiences.
Briefing notes	<p>Internal need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>Includes Regional Council/senior leaders/employees and will contain updates on the situation (can be combined with the email tool listed above).</p>	As needed.
Crisis-specific communications plans	Developed by Corporate Communications, in consultation with key business units, the crisis-specific communications plan will build off of this Plan and will be more tactical, listing specific key deliverables and detailed action for Corporate Communications staff and senior leadership.	As needed as time will allow.

Internal communications tools

Communications Tool	Audience/Details	Frequency
Intranet	<p>Internal need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>Includes municipal employees and members of Regional Council and includes a homepage “slider” to draw the audience’s attention. It can act as a single source of information for internal audiences.</p> <p>Note: Not typically deployed unless the broader internal audience needs highly specific information.</p>	Updated as/if needed.
Digital screen network	<p>Internal need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>Includes employees and internal groups. It can also be included as part of keeping external audiences informed as residents have access to the digital screens in locations like libraries and recreation facilities.</p>	Updated as needed and can coincide with email messages.
All-staff bulletins	<p>Internal need-to-know and want-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>Includes employees and Regional Council.</p>	Typically, all-staff bulletins are sent on Thursdays but can be used more frequently as needed in a crisis situation.

Internal communications tools

Communications Tool	Audience/Details	Frequency
Internal collaboration tools (SharePoint, Teams, etc.)	Internal need-to-know, specifically those with operational duties. Microsoft Teams and Teams Sites (SharePoint) provide resources to enable leadership and operational communication as well as the coordination of external communications activities.	Up to daily use for operational coordination; dependent on operational needs.
hfxALERT	Internal need-to-know audiences listed above. Internal operational staff. Members of HRFE, HRP and Community Safety can deploy hfxALERT mass notification system to support internal communications coordination.	As/if required.

External communications tools

It is important to note that these external communications tools are also used to inform internal audiences as they would have the same access to these tools as the external audiences. As previously noted, well-informed internal audiences can contribute to effective external communications.

External communications tools

Communications Tool	Audience/Details	Frequency
Alert Ready – mass notification system	<p>External need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>This is the primary method of mass notification for emergencies and disasters where there is imminent risk to life will be communicated through the Nova Scotia Emergency Management Organization (NSEMO) and the Alert Ready program. This is not a subscription-based service and all residents who are currently within the intended notification boundary will be notified through mobile devices. It should be noted that Alert Ready is a national service which the Province of Nova Scotia opts into with provincial EMO acting as lead in terms of processes and policies.</p> <p>Deployment and criteria for using this tool is captured in Appendix F.</p>	As needed.

External communications tools

Communications Tool	Audience/Details	Frequency
hfxALERT – mass notification system	<p>External need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>hfxALERT will be used to provide direction to residents in the impacted area who have registered with the hfxALERT system. Examples include a hazard risk notification, a shelter in place notification or an evacuation alert. Residents who have registered with the system will receive emergency notifications through their choices of the following: email, landline, text or mobile calling. The hfxALERT system will also be used to notify impacted residents of changes to the notifications or alerts mentioned above.</p> <p>Deployment and criteria for using this tool is captured in Appendix G.</p>	As needed.
Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registry (VVPR)	<p>The VVPR is intended to provide residents who may become substantially more vulnerable due to emergencies and disasters, the opportunity to include themselves on a list to be communicated and their specific needs addressed prior or during an event.</p> <p>Activation criteria for using this tool is captured in Appendix H.</p>	Activated as needed.

External communications tools

Communications Tool	Audience/Details	Frequency
halifax.ca	<p>External need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>The municipal website will be updated with all relevant information regarding the varying types of public notification, alerts and service impacts.</p> <p>The website will also provide important information for impacted communities including locations of evacuation centres, comfort centres and supports that may be available.</p>	<p>As needed.</p> <p>Updates to municipal webpages will be posted as quickly as information is available to be shared.</p>
Public Service Announcements (PSAs); Municipal Statements; and/or News Releases	<p>These communications tools are designed to provide media organizations with all the relevant information.</p> <p>In addition to distributing directly to media, these are forwarded to internal contacts, including Regional Council, and shared with the public via social media posts that link to the News section of halifax.ca.</p> <p>All PSAs/ Municipal Statements/ News Releases related to a crisis will be activated as a notification/alert on halifax.ca (which posts information on the top banner of every webpage on halifax.ca, linking to the News section of halifax.ca)</p>	<p>These documents are typically sent to media three times a day – early morning, early afternoon and late afternoon/early evening. A daily schedule is established at the outset, based on protocols, with exact timing determined by the circumstances of the situation.</p> <p>As well, depending on how the situation evolves, the frequency of these releases could be increased.</p>

External communications tools

Communications Tool	Audience/Details	Frequency
Q&A document	<p>External need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>Developed by Corporate Communications, in consultation with key business units, the Q&A document consists of potential questions that could be asked of the municipality concerning the crisis as well as the proposed answers.</p> <p>The information in the Q&A can be used to shape the other communications tools on this list.</p>	As needed and updated regularly as new information is received and/or questions are asked by internal and/or external audiences.
Backgrounders and fact sheets	<p>External need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>Developed by Corporate Communications, in consultation with key business units, backgrounders and fact sheets are designed to provide additional information about the situation and/or the elements of the municipal response to the crisis. For example, a fact sheet could be used to explain the HRFE units that have responded to a major fire.</p>	

External communications tools

Communications Tool	Audience/Details	Frequency
Social media	<p>External need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>The municipality has several social media channels used to share information to all audiences. These channels include X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. LinkedIn may also be used, but as this channel is primarily organizational/business related, its activation during a crisis will vary.</p>	<p>As needed.</p> <p>Social media posts are a very fast way of reaching audiences directly and will often be used to provide time-sensitive information and/or direction (e.g. in the event of evacuation).</p> <p>Social media posts are also used to amplify PSAs/Municipal Statements/Media Releases and posts from partner agencies like the province.</p>

External communications tools

Communications Tool	Audience/Details	Frequency
Media availabilities/news conferences/one-on-one media interviews	<p>External need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>Providing media access to spokespeople and subject matter experts is key to keeping audiences informed and reassured of the measures that are being taken to address the situation.</p> <p>Depending on the size and scope of the situation, media will often broadcast these opportunities live.</p> <p>The municipality also has the capability to livestream/broadcast these availabilities through a facility at Alderney Landing (targeted for completion by fall 2024).</p>	<p>As needed, but the first one needs to be as soon as possible after the municipal response to the situation has started. Goal is to initiate media availability within 12 hours of the situation being deemed a crisis by the CAO.</p> <p>Subsequent opportunities to speak to media will be assessed and provided as the situation unfolds. This could include a staff-escorted media tour of an impacted area, pending safety and operational considerations.</p>
Digital screen network	<p>External need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>While primarily a tool for communicating with internal audiences, it can also be leveraged to inform external audiences via the digital screens in locations like libraries and recreation facilities.</p>	<p>Updated as needed and would typically align with distribution of critical messages via PSAs/Municipal Statements/Media Releases.</p>

External communications tools

Communications Tool	Audience/Details	Frequency
Community meetings	<p>External need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>Depending on the type and location of an event, a community meeting may be required to provide an opportunity for residents to receive up to date information and ask questions. This method is most likely to occur in rural communities should communication methods be interrupted. Local elected officials may be asked to participate in these meetings as well as the lead response agencies to inform technical information.</p>	As needed.
Councillors' social media /newsletters	<p>External need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>Councillors are encouraged to share information that has been provided through official municipal channels (e.g. halifax.ca, social media, PSAs, etc.) via their networks.</p>	<p>As needed, typically done after a crisis has been underway for a period of time (likely a few days or weeks) and is dependent on Councillors' schedules or communications timelines. It is intended to provide residents with updated information about the recovery efforts.</p> <p>Examples include evacuations or during significant disruptions to municipal services.</p>

External communications tools

Communications Tool	Audience/Details	Frequency
Paid advertisements (print and/or digital)	<p>External need-to-know audiences listed above.</p> <p>Print advertisements are most often used in more rural areas of the municipality where access to digital communications tools is more limited.</p>	<p>As needed, typically done after a crisis has been underway for a period of time (likely a few days or weeks) and it intended to provide residents with updated information about the recovery efforts.</p> <p>Examples include long-standing evacuations or during disruptions to municipal services.</p>
Municipal apps	<p>External need to know audiences listed above.</p> <p>Municipal apps, such as the Halifax Recycles app, can push notifications about impacts to curbside collection services directly to residents.</p>	<p>As needed, typically done after a crisis has been underway for a period of time (likely a few days or weeks) and it intended to provide residents with updated information about the recovery efforts.</p> <p>Examples include long-standing evacuations or during disruptions to municipal services.</p>

Emergency communications playbook

The Emergency Communications Playbook is designed for use by the Corporate Communications team. It provides phased approaches and access to detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) used by Corporate Communications to quickly scale support to an incident response. The key components of this playbook include:

- Timeline of communications activities.
- SOPs and related protocols for training and execution purposes.

Components of the playbook will require actions/deliverables by designated positions in business units across the organization that are supporting an emergency/crisis response (e.g. Community Safety, Public Works, Halifax Transit, etc.). While the playbook offers communications processes based on the needs of the situation, and is a living document maintained by Corporate Communications, the root of this playbook outlines a basic framework of communications activities that includes at least three daily PSAs and ongoing activation and amplification of social media and web content throughout the incident response.

A high-level overview of this playbook is included at Appendix E.

Communications support model

Communications response to crisis requires key roles and supporting staff, aligned and integrated with the emergency response approach (i.e. Incident Command System), to best maintain the principles and leverage the tools and activities outlined in this communications plan. Corporate Communications, in consultation and coordination with municipal Emergency Management and the incident response lead, is responsible for enabling this support to include a minimum of an Information Officer and supporting staff to effectively support the communications effort.

Information Officer

The Information Officer is an identified role within the Incident Command System's Unified Command approach. The role is responsible for developing and releasing information about the incident in coordination with, and approval of, the Incident Commander. Detailed responsibilities may include developing materials for media briefings, issuing media releases or other forms of public information and related tasks while in direct liaison with the Incident Commander. Specific responsibilities and duties are informed by the circumstances of the incident.

- Corporate Communications Managing Director, or their designate, is responsible for appointing an Information Officer when required for the purposes this plan.

Additional functions

Depending on the circumstances of the incident, the communications needs of the response and related operations, the Corporate Communications Managing Director, in close coordination with the Information Officer, Incident Commander and municipal Emergency Management team may appoint personnel to fulfill the following roles in the following sections as part of the overall communications support to an incident:

- **Public Affairs personnel** are responsible for media relations, publication of public service announcements and supporting the Information Officer in the overall management of communications activities to support the incident response.

- **Marketing personnel** are responsible for supporting webpage standup in response and promotion of communications activities via channels outlined in this plan with exception of those under the purview of Public Affairs personnel. This includes social media and consideration for paid promotional support (e.g. radio ads, etc.).
- **Internal Communications personnel** support the deliver and overall tone for communications within the municipal organization, supporting the organization in effective communications to all municipal business units, managers and employees.
- **Technical support personnel** include other members of the Corporate Communications with experience or training in variety of supporting functions that help enable specific tasks. These roles include:
 - Media briefing livestream operation via media briefing facilities.
 - Design and creative services personnel
 - Any/all functions within the Corporate Communications Print Services section as required and through coordination between the Corporate Communications Managing Director and Manager Print Services.
 - Related administrative or logistics functions deemed necessary to support effective delivery of communications activities.

Collaboration and partnerships

A crisis often necessitates collaboration between numerous organizations and jurisdictions. These partnerships must be fostered prior to a crisis. During a crisis, the municipality must work collaboratively across its business units as well as with other affected organizations and community partners to ensure an effective and swift response. Contact lists for key communications and related coordination personnel (municipal and provincial) are maintained by the municipality's Corporate Communications team. Contact lists external and critical infrastructure partners are maintained by the municipalities Emergency Management team.

Communicating after a crisis

There is much to be learned from a crisis. Arranging a timely after action debrief with select internal and external key partners to discuss what went well and what can be improved is crucial. In addition to this Plan being revisited annually, at a minimum, it should also be updated after a crisis to ensure lessons learned are incorporated and processes and protocols are enhanced accordingly.

There are also several opportunities throughout the year that can be leveraged to support annual communication efforts with external audiences to be prepared for crisis situations (e.g. Emergency Preparedness Week; National Fire Prevention Week; promotion of the Hazard, Risk and Vulnerability Assessment, etc.); Corporate Communications provides regular communications support to various business units, including Community Safety and HRFE, for these initiatives.

Appendix A – Issues management versus crisis management

Issues management and crisis management are inherently different in several key categories: choice, certainty, urgency, cost, continuity, time, impact and outcomes, which are explained in the following chart:

Key Category	Issues Management	Crisis Management
Choice	<p>Explore all possible choices</p> <p>Weigh benefits of each option</p> <p>Make an informed decision</p>	<p>Choices become fewer rather than more as the situation develops.</p>
Certainty	<p>Research all the facts</p> <p>Analyze views of key partners</p> <p>Obtain independent expert opinion to ensure nothing has been overlooked</p>	<p>May have to make decisions without all the facts, including what happened, why, who was responsible and what it will cost – Go with what you know.</p>
Urgency	<p>Time to fully assess and make best decision</p>	<p>Often under pressure to make a decision immediately.</p>
Cost	<p>Potential cost is an important consideration</p>	<p>Cost is not an immediate consideration.</p>

Key Category	Issues Management	Crisis Management
Continuity	Normal executive activity, often done according to business hours of the organization	<p>Outside normal experience.</p> <p>Typically cause executives to drop all other priorities.</p> <p>May severely disrupt continuity of the organization's core business.</p>
Time	May extend over weeks, months or even years	<p>Usually have a more explicit timeframe and eventually come to an end.</p> <p>Impact of crisis may last much longer, particularly when considering an organization's reputation.</p>
Impact	Identified event or trend that could have a significant impact on the organization	<p>Threatens life, property or the environment.</p> <p>Threatens capacity of the organization to carry on business or achieve its strategic objectives.</p>
Outcomes	Identify potential problems early and develop proactive plans to work towards planned outcomes which are positive for the organization	<p>Minimize damage to the community, key partners and organization.</p> <p>Survive the crisis.</p>

Appendix B – Crisis response timeline: First 60 minutes (with log)

In a crisis, because everything can happen so quickly, the first 60 minutes are crucial.

The Information Officer (IO) will engage members of the communications leadership team to assist in assessing the situation through the following:

First 60 minutes actions log

It is important to note that some of these actions may not occur in this exact sequence, depending on the situation, and some may occur simultaneously.

Step	Action	Result
1.	Identify who is in charge (e.g. Incident Commander/CAO) and establish line of communication/coordination.	
2.	Call communications team together and identify roles of each team member.	
3.	Immediately acknowledge issue with internal/external “need-to-know” audiences through appropriate channels (email, social media, etc.) including consideration for dedicated webpage. Acknowledgement may only mean acknowledgement of an emerging matter and advising when the next update, including any required actions or impacts, may be anticipated.	
4.	Take stock of situation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What information is needed?	

First 60 minutes actions log

It is important to note that some of these actions may not occur in this exact sequence, depending on the situation, and some may occur simultaneously.

Step	Action	Result
	Work with who is in charge to complete Target Audience Worksheet.	
5.	What are people feeling? What emotions need to be considered?	
6.	What can and cannot be said in terms of privacy policies. Is legal or HR counsel needed to answer questions?	
7.	Develop key messages.	
8.	Identify communications channels required for ongoing messaging and timing for distribution, both internal to the crisis team (e.g. Teams channel), internal to the broader internal audience and external (see Target Audience Worksheet).	
9.	Identify and prepare spokesperson(s).	
10.	Prepare communications materials.	
11.	Continue to communicate with incoming media and any supporting external emergency authorities as appropriate; in most cases this will involve advising that an update is forthcoming and scheduled updates will be provided.	

First 60 minutes actions log

It is important to note that some of these actions may not occur in this exact sequence, depending on the situation, and some may occur simultaneously.

Step	Action	Result
12.	Track continuing social media requirements and any new information that is able to be shared publicly.	
13.	Update messages (e.g. social media) with any relevant new information; be careful to avoid information overload.	
14.	Incorporate channels, such as website, with approved messages.	
15.	Determine what's next?	

Appendix C – Target Audience Worksheet

This worksheet is provided for Incident Commanders and Information Officers to track target audiences to consider as part of response to an incident, including the audience category as it relates to this crisis communications plan, the frequency with which they should be communicated, and the planned communications products, tools and channels to be used in reaching these audiences.

Audience	Need to know or want to know? <i>Indicated as NTK or WTK. See "Audiences" section of crisis communications plan</i>	Frequency <i>How often should they be communicated with?</i>	Products, tools and channels <i>See "Communications Tools" section of crisis communications plan</i>
<i>Example audience</i>	NTK	3 x per day	Email PSA Website

Appendix D – Incident Command System (ICS) incident types

Type	Characteristics
Type 5	<p>Handled by one or two single resources and/or up to six personnel</p> <p>No command or general staff positions are staffed, other than the Incident Commander</p> <p>Verbal Incident Action Plan (IAP)</p> <p>Contained to one operational period</p> <p>No EOC activation</p> <p>Examples: vehicle/pedestrian collision; robbery; aggravated assault; house fire</p>
Type 4	<p>More than one agency may become involved and/or the formation of a task force</p> <p>Some of the command and general staff positions are activated if needed</p> <p>Contained to one operational period</p> <p>Verbal IAP/briefing form (ICS201) may be used</p> <p>Unlikely to result in an EOC activation</p> <p>Examples: homicide; standoff with limited threat to public safety; Emergency Response Team response</p>
Type 3	<p>Multi-agency response and likely a multi-site response affecting all or a large part of the municipality</p> <p>Some or all of the command and general staff positions activated</p> <p>Multiple operational periods</p> <p>Written IAP required for each operational period</p> <p>EOC likely activated</p>

Type	Characteristics
	<p>Examples: Hold and Secure/Lockdown (e.g. due to active aggressor); Shelter-in-Place (e.g. due to gas leak, hazmat); homicide with numerous casualties; severe weather events like snowstorms/flooding with multiple damage areas; large evacuations</p>
Type 2	<p>Complex incident involving multiple sites and is extending beyond capabilities of various sites, requiring overall coordination of all municipal and external resources</p> <p>Most or all of the command and general staff positions are staffed</p> <p>Multiple operational periods with operational personnel not exceeding 500</p> <p>Written IAP</p> <p>-EOC activated</p> <p>Examples: Mass shootings; major plane crash; natural disasters such as hurricanes, severe flooding and extended snow storms with large damages and/or protracted recovery times over a large part of the municipality; Amber Alert (note: while not officially aligned with an ICS response, it would see commensurate resources applied)</p>
Type 1	<p>Highly complex incident involving the entire municipality</p> <p>High impact on municipality</p> <p>Multi-agency and likely multi-jurisdictional</p> <p>All command and general staff positions are filled</p> <p>Operations personnel can exceed 500 per operational period</p> <p>Joint activation of EOC with provincial and federal centres</p> <p>Business continuity plans implemented across all business units</p> <p>Examples: chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear hazards; hostage situation; natural disasters with extensive damages and/or protracted recovery times across the municipality</p>

Appendix E – Emergency Communications Playbook overview

About the Emergency Communications Playbook

The Emergency Communications Playbook is maintained by Corporate Communications and outlines a consistent order of operations to be applied to crisis communications approach. The playbook is considered a living document and is updated and adapted through formal and informal post-incident debriefs and analysis.

The playbook acknowledges that every crisis is unique requiring specific considerations that influence the effectiveness of communications activities including types of activities, as well as associated timing and frequency. To this end the playbook organizes all Standard Operating Procedures (e.g. conducting media briefing, issuing PSA, etc.) and templates (e.g. PSA, social media content, etc.) to ensure communications support to emerging matters can be easily adapted and continue to support the principles of the Municipal Crisis Communications Plan.

Basic order of operations for communications activities

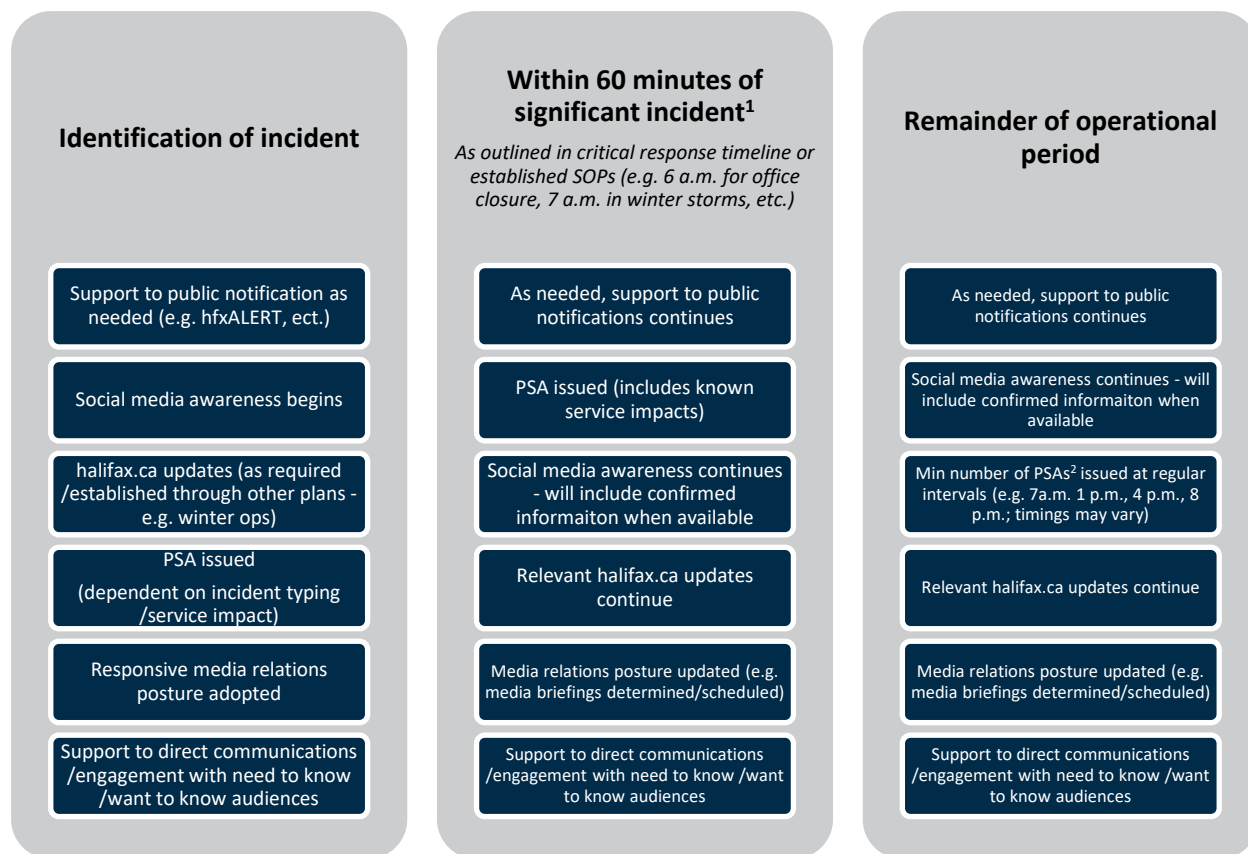
The playbook establishes a basic order of operations for communications activities that are applied to all crisis communications responses:

1. (as/if required) Support to Public Notifications and supporting platforms (hfxALERT, Alert Ready, etc.)
2. Critical information posted to halifax.ca
3. Push information via primary social media channels (linking to halifax.ca content)
4. Issue PSA
5. Regularly update content on webpages
6. Issue round-up style PSA
7. Continue cycle as required

This order of operations is assessed and adjusted, at the recommendation of Corporate Communications, pending the evolving status of a crisis and the objectives identified by the Incident Commander.

Outline of the Playbook

A detailed, timeline-based flow chart is the primary layout of the playbook, providing members of the Corporate Communications team with quick links to the most recent templates, standard operating procedures and other resources to support crisis communications efforts. The figure below provides the basic framework of the playbook.



Notes:

1. Significant incidents are those identified as incidents meeting an anticipated Incident Command System type 2 or higher.
2. PSAs are based on anticipated or declared Incident Command System typing as follows:
 - o Type 3 or lower: Minimum of 1
 - o Type 2 or higher: Minimum of 3

Appendix F – Alert Ready activation process and criteria

This process is completed by authorized \municipal employees or Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) employees as directed by Director Emergency Management/EOC Director.

Note: Halifax Regional Police and RCMP Halifax have authority to issue alerts related to police operations – they do not require CAO authorization.

Step 1	Emergency event/incident		
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responding agency notifies HRM Director Emergency Management or designate 2. HRM Director Emergency Management or designate confirms emergency meets criteria for use of Alert Ready system (see note above) 3. HRM Director Emergency Management or designate obtain CAO/Executive Director of Community Safety authorization for use of Alert Ready (see note above) 		
Step 2	Alert Ready request process – Completed by authorized HRM employee		
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call Shubie Radio at 1-833-758-4540 2. Provide Shubie Operator with Alert Authorizer PIN and Name 3. Complete Alert Ready Request Form (available from municipal Emergency Management) 4. Have second staff member (e.g. IO) review for accuracy and quality (spelling, etc.) 5. Submit request email with completed Alert Ready Request form attached to shubie@novascotia.ca (Subject of email “completed NSEMO Alert Ready Request”) 		
Step 3	Alert broadcast		
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shubie Radio submits Alert Ready notification to Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office for broadcast 		
Step 4	Amplify alert messaging and Alert Ready Message Updates		
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Corporate Communications will amplify through the municipality’s primary social media accounts (e.g. X, Facebook, Instagram), website (halifax.ca) and public service announcements/municipal statements as appropriate 2. Send updates to Emergency Management Contact/EOC Director and CAO for approval 3. Send approved messages to Emergency Management Emergency Contact/Director of Emergency Management for onward relay to Shubie Radio for transmission via Alert Ready 		
<table> <tr> <td> ALERT READY AUTHORIZATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAO/or designate • Executive Director of Community Safety </td><td> ALERT READY ACTIVATION CRITERIA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evacuation Alert • Evacuation Order • Mandatory Shelter in Place • Potential or imminent life-threatening Event </td></tr> </table>		ALERT READY AUTHORIZATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAO/or designate • Executive Director of Community Safety 	ALERT READY ACTIVATION CRITERIA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evacuation Alert • Evacuation Order • Mandatory Shelter in Place • Potential or imminent life-threatening Event
ALERT READY AUTHORIZATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAO/or designate • Executive Director of Community Safety 	ALERT READY ACTIVATION CRITERIA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evacuation Alert • Evacuation Order • Mandatory Shelter in Place • Potential or imminent life-threatening Event 		

Provincial Alert Ready notification criteria

During emergency where there is an immediate need to issue a mass notification due to an event where there are potential or imminent life-threatening consequences, the municipality will utilize the provincial Alert Ready System.

This system is operated by the Province of Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office.

Evacuation Alerts

- Extreme weather events or other hazards posing extreme risk to community where a potential for evacuation order is significant.

Evacuation Orders

- Extreme weather events or other hazards that pose an imminent risk to community and life safety that have trigger instruction for mandatory evacuation orders.

Mandatory Shelter in Place

- Specific hazards may require residents to Shelter in Place if evacuating an area increases their risk of mortality, injury, or sickness.

Potential or Imminent life-threatening Event

- Specific list of the types of alerts that are considered a threat to life can be seen in the Alert ready form.

Alert Ready notification templates

Templates for common notifications (evacuations, types of shelter in place, etc.) are available through Emergency Management file storage or collaboration systems (e.g. SharePoint, etc.) to help ensure consistency of these notifications and the speed at which accurate notifications can be shared on this platform. Emergency Management maintains these templates with support of Corporate Communications.

- BU-CS-Emergency Management Office - NOTIFICATION TEMPLATES - All Documents (link may only be accessible by request to municipal Emergency Management team)

Schedule A to Appendix F – Sample Alert Ready activation request form

THIS IS NOT A FUNCTIONAL FORM.
Sample only. Provided for familiarization purposes.
View the Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office Alert Ready guide for form and additional details.

NSEMO Alert Ready Request Form



For information on how to fill out this form see the "NSEMO Alert Ready Request Guide" document.

1. Requesting organization: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) Organization PIN: [#####](#)
2. Requestor name: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
3. Requestor phone number: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#) [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
4. Approver name and position: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
5. Alert Ready Message Criteria
Choose one for each row
Message Type: ☐ Alert ☐ Update ☐ Cancel
Event Category: ☐ **Broadcast Immediate (BI)** ☐ Non-Broadcast Immediate (NBI)
Event Type: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

See "List of All Alert Ready Events" immediately following this form for event types.
Broadcast immediate (BI) alerts are highlighted in **blue** and are bolded.
6. Alert Ready Message Content (all entries are mandatory; avoid use of acronyms and 24-hour clock)
☐ English ☐ ~~English~~ and French

Note

The Alert Ready System is designed to automatically combine the Headline, Area Description, Description and Instructions as they are entered to compose the Broadcast (**Television, Radio text to speech**) and Wireless alert messaging. It is best practice to avoid duplication of content in these sections where possible. The character limit of your entire alert must be 600 characters or less.

Alert Area

An alert can be sent to the entire province, or to individual/multiple counties. List at least one county the alert applies to, or 'Nova Scotia' to send the alert to the entire province.

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Headline (required) - Provide a brief one-line title for the event in progress.

[Click or tap here to enter English text.](#)

[Click or tap here to enter French text.](#)

Area Description (required) - Enter area description affected by the emergency.

[Click or tap here to enter English text.](#)

[Click or tap here to enter French text.](#)

Description (required) - Enter a description of the emergency.

[Click or tap here to enter English text.](#)

[Click or tap here to enter French text.](#)

THIS IS NOT A FUNCTIONAL FORM.
Sample only. Provided for familiarization purposes.
View the Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office Alert Ready guide for form and additional details.

NSEMO Alert Ready Request Form



Instructions (required) - Enter instructions you wish the public to follow.

[Click or tap here to enter English text.](#)

[Click or tap here to enter French text.](#)

- ☐ By checking this box, you are providing the Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office and its authorized alert issuers the authority and permission to amend the emergency alert content to remove invalid characters which prevent the alert from being sent, or to reduce the size of the alert to fit within the character limitations of the national alert ready system (**600 characters**). This does not authorize changes of the information within the Alert Ready message, unless requested and approved by the head of the organization (**approver**).

Submitting

A public alert cannot be issued until the following has been confirmed:

- ☐ I have called and reached Shubenacadie Radio Communications Centre.
- ☐ Requesting organization has the jurisdiction over the physical location where the Alert is to be provided as well as a mandate over the subject matter of the requested Alert.
- ☐ Request includes approval from the head of the organization – Police representative, CAO or designate, Deputy Minister, Band Chief or Band Manager.
- ☐ Form is completed and meets all requirements

Submit by email to Shubenacadie Radio Communications Centre.

To: SHUBIE@novascotia.ca

Subject: Completed NSEMO Alert Ready Request

Remember to attach the completed NSEMO Alert Ready Request form and all other necessary attachments before sending to SRCC.

THIS IS NOT A FUNCTIONAL FORM.
Sample only. Provided for familiarization purposes.
View the Nova Scotia Emergency Management Office Alert Ready guide for form and additional details.

NSEMO Alert Ready Request Form



List of all Alert Ready Events

Broadcast Immediate (intrusive) alerts are highlighted in bold blue text.

Administration	Geophysical	Missing Person	Temperature
Air Quality	Avalanche	AMBER Alert	Arctic
Animal Health	Earthquake	Missing Vulnerable Person	Outflow
Animal Disease	Landslide	Silver Alert	Cold Wave
Animal Feed	Magnetic Storm	Public Services Emergency	Flash Freeze
Aviation	Tsunami	Support Facilities	Frost
Notice to Airmen	Meteorite	Emergency Support	Heat Wave
Airspace Closure	Lahar	Services School Bus	High Heat and Humidity
Airport Closure	Lava Flow	School Closure	Wind Chill
Aircraft Crash	Pyroclastic Flow	School Lockdown	Test Message
Civil	Pyroclastic Surge	Service or Facility	Utility
Civil Emergency	Volcano	Transit	Cable Service
Public Event	Volcano Ash Cloud	Preparedness Reminders	Diesel Supply
Volunteer Request	Hazardous Materials	Product Safety	Electricity Supply
Criminal Activity	Chemical Hazard	Railway	Gasoline Supply
Dangerous Person	Biological Hazard	Train Accident	Heating Oil Supply
Home Crime	Radiological Hazard	Rescue	Internet Service
Industrial Crime	Explosive Hazard	Roadway	Natural Gas Supply
Retail Crime	Falling Object	Bridge Closure	Satellite Service
Terrorism	Health	Roadway Closure	Sewer System
Vehicle Crime	Ambulance	Roadway Delay	Telephone Service
Dangerous Animal	Blood Supply	Hazardous Road Conditions	911 Service
Fire	Drinking Water	Traffic Report	Waste Management
Wildfire	Food and Drug Supply	Roadway Usage Condition	Water Supply
Industrial Fire	Hospital	Motor Vehicle Accident	Wind
Urban Fire	Infectious Disease	Storm Blizzard	Other
Forest Fire	Ice	Blowing Snow	
Flood	Ice Pressure	Dust Storm	
Storm Surge	Rapid Closing of Coastal	Freezing Drizzle	
High Water Level	Leads	Freezing Rain	
Overland Flow Flood	Special Ice	Hurricane	
Flash Flood	Marine	Rainfall	
Dam Overflow	Freezing Spray	Thunderstorm	
	Gale Wind	Snowfall	
	Hurricane Force Wind	Snow Squall	
	Iceberg	Tornado	
	Marine Security	Tropical Storm	
	Nautical Incident	Winter Storm	
	Special Marine	Weather	
	Squall		
	Storm Force Winds		
	Waterspout		

Call SRCC
**if there is an
imminent threat
to life that is not
captured in the Alert
Ready category list.**
1-833-758-4540

Appendix G – hfxALERT activation process and criteria

This process is completed by Authorized municipal Employees or Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) employees as directed by the Director of Emergency Management/designate or EOC Director.

	Emergency event/incident	
Step 1	<div>1. Responding agency notify municipal Director Emergency Management or designate (see below).</div> <div>2. Director of Emergency Management or designate confirms emergency meets criteria for hfxALERT use.</div> <div>3. Director of Emergency Management or designate obtains authorization for use of hfxALERT.</div> <div>4. Director of Emergency Management or designate Notifies CAO (or Designate).</div>	
	hfxALERT request process	
Step 2	<div>1. Call Director of Emergency Management or designate</div> <div>2. Complete hfxALERT Request Form (link available from municipal Emergency Management).</div> <div>3. Have second staff member (e.g. IO) review for accuracy and quality (spelling, etc.)</div> <div>4. Submit Request email to hrm_emo@halifax.ca.</div> <div>5. Emergency Management Administrator/or Delegate to draft alert.</div>	
	Alert broadcast	
Step 3	<div>1. Director Emergency Management or designate to approve draft message.</div> <div>2. Emergency Management Administrator/or delegate to issue hfxALERT.</div>	
	Amplify alert messaging	
Step 4	<div>1. Corporate Communications will amplify through the municipality's primary social media accounts (e.g. X, Facebook, Instagram), website (halifax.ca) and public service announcements/municipal statements as appropriate.</div> <div>2. Send updates to Emergency Management Contact/EOC Director and CAO for approval</div> <div>3. Send approved messages to Emergency Management Emergency Contact/Director of Emergency Management for (if needed) onward relay to Shubie Radio for transmission via Alert Ready.</div>	
hfxALERT AUTHORIZATION		hfxALERT ACTIVATION CRITERA
<div><div>• CAO /or designate</div><div>• Executive Director of Community Safety or designate</div><div>• EOC Manager or designate.</div><div>• Commissioner of Operations or ED of Public Works or their designate</div></div>	<div><div>• Fire Chief or their designate</div><div>• Police Chief and RCMP Chief Superintendent and their designates</div><div>• HW General Manager or their designate</div></div>	<div><div>• Hazard Notifications</div><div>• Evacuation Alerts</div><div>• Evacuation Order</div><div>• Evacuation Rescinds</div></div>

hfxALERT public notification criteria

Municipal emergency notifications will be distributed through hfxALERT in a prompt and efficient manner. Notification types that will be distributed by hfxALERT are Hazard Notifications, Evacuation Alerts, Evacuation Orders, and Evacuation Rescinds.

It should be noted that hfxALERT is a tool that supplements the overall crisis communications response. **Where there is imminent risk to life safety, the provincial Alert Ready system will be used in conjunction with hfxALERT.** Frequent alerts may be required. Please see below for the types of information residents will receive. All subscribers to the hfxALERT system will receive all noted alerts.

Hazard Notifications

- Extreme weather events or other hazard posing moderate risk to community;
- Extreme weather events or other hazard posing moderate risk to critical infrastructure;
- Extreme weather events or other hazard where preparedness recommendations are necessary to communicate to public;
 - Extreme weather events or other hazard where sheltering in place instructions are being recommended due to risk of compromised road infrastructure; or,
 - Extreme weather events or other hazards where a voluntary evacuation has been issued and temporary lodging has been made available.

Evacuation Alerts

- Extreme weather events or other hazards posing extreme risk to community where a potential for evacuation order is significant.

Evacuation Orders

- Extreme weather events or other hazards that pose an imminent risk to community a life safety that have trigger instruction for mandatory evacuation orders.

Evacuation Rescinds Notifications

- When the imminent risk has been nullified and residents are able to return to their communities.

hfxALERT notification templates

Templates for common notifications (evacuations, types of shelter in place, etc.) are available through Emergency Management file storage or collaboration systems (e.g. SharePoint, etc.) to help ensure consistency of these notifications and the speed at which accurate notifications can be shared on this platform. Emergency Management maintains these templates with support of Corporate Communications.

- BU-CS-Emergency Management Office - NOTIFICATION TEMPLATES - All Documents (link may only be accessible by request to municipal Emergency Management team)

Appendix H – Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registry notification criteria

The Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registry program will be activated anytime an Alert ready is used and for the following:

Hazard Notifications

- Extreme weather events or other hazard posing moderate risk to community;
- Extreme weather events or other hazard posing moderate risk to critical infrastructure;
- Extreme weather events or other hazard where preparedness recommendations are necessary to communicate to public;
- Extreme weather-related events or other hazard where sheltering in place instructions are being recommended due to risk of compromised road infrastructure; or,
- Extreme weather-related events or other hazards where a voluntary evacuation has been issued and temporary lodging has been made available.

Evacuation Alert

- Extreme weather events or other hazards posing extreme risk to community where a potential for evacuation order is significant.

Evacuation Orders

- Extreme weather events or other hazards that pose an imminent risk to community and life safety that trigger instruction for mandatory evacuation orders.

Evacuation Rescinds Notifications

- When the imminent risk has been nullified and residents are able to return to their communities.