

Fire & Emergency Services Committee Meeting AGENDA

Thursday, September 3, 2026 – 7:00 p.m.

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of Agenda (as circulated)**
- 3. Approval of Notes**
- 4. Business Arising from Minutes**
 - 4.1 Fire Service Modernization 2-5**
- 5. L.R.F.E.S. Report**
- 6. New Business**
 - 6.1 Member-at-Large Vacancy (Oct 2026)**
 - 6.2 Fire Service Coordinator Annual Registration Report**
 - 6.3 Recruitment & Retention Strategy Update – Soft Skills /Leadership Training 6-7**
 - 6.4 Phasing out of AFFF Foam**
- 7. Added Items**
- 8. In Camera**
- 9. Adjournment**

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Nova Scotia Fire Bulletin

August 2026

Minister's Message

Over the past year, we've made meaningful progress to strengthen Nova Scotia's fire service. As the first province in Canada to establish a dedicated Department of Emergency Management, we remain focused on enhancing public safety and building stronger, more resilient communities.

One of our key priorities is ensuring you have access to the training, resources, and support you need to do your job safely and effectively. That's why we've continued work and invest in:

- New Level 1 training grants that will be unveiled later this year.
- Deployment of the Mobile Burn Unit, including its first deployments across the province.
- Improved pathways for firefighters to obtain class 3 driving licenses
- Continued work with Dalhousie University to strengthen officer education.
- Updated training opportunities through the Office of the Fire Marshal.
- Development of draft guidelines to strengthen firefighter health and safety through the subcommittees of the Fire Training Advisory Committee.

We're also building regional training capacity, so firefighters have greater access to quality training closer to home.

Despite a challenging fiscal environment, our government maintained the enhanced funding levels for fire service programs that were increased significantly last year. We recognize the vital role volunteer fire departments play in communities across Nova Scotia and supporting them remains a priority.

As we continue to modernize and strengthen the fire service, we are committed to listening to firefighters, chiefs, and departments – as you know this work best. Your experience, expertise, and feedback are helping shape the future of fire service in Nova Scotia and the work ahead.

Thank you for your continued dedication, professionalism, and commitment to keeping Nova Scotians safe.

The Honourable Kim Masland
Minister of Emergency Management



Structure Protection Unit training in Barrington

Our Vision: Every Nova Scotian has access to reliable, evidence-based fire services, no matter where they live. Every firefighter has the training and equipment needed to stay safe while serving their communities.

Mobile Burn Unit Training Begins this Month

- In March 2026, the Province of Nova Scotia purchased two Mobile Burn Units (MBUs) to expand access to live fire training, bringing high-quality training closer to home and reducing travel requirements for fire departments across the province.
- The first MBU is expected to begin operations in the coming weeks. As part of the rollout, RelyOn, a Third Party Vendor, has engaged Fire Chiefs and Training Officers and completed site assessments with fire departments across the province.
- **To schedule training, please visit:** <https://www.nsmbu.ca/>

Resilience Spotlight: PSPNet

- Every day, firefighters and first responders respond to situations that most people are running from, placing the health and safety of others ahead of their own. They are regularly exposed to traumatic events, which can have lasting impacts on mental health and increase the risk of conditions such as PTSD, depression, and anxiety.
- As a firefighter in Nova Scotia, you can access PSPNet, a confidential online mental health service that provides flexible therapist-guided and self-guided cognitive behaviour therapy programs that can be completed on your own schedule from home.
- **Learn more at** www.pspnet.ca

Class 3 Licensing Update

- Nova Scotia is launching a pilot project in August in Digby and Colchester Counties to improve access to Class 3 driver licensing for firefighters, particularly in volunteer departments, with expansion to other regions planned for the fall.
- The pilot aims to reduce common barriers such as travel, scheduling, testing availability, and licensing costs while maintaining required safety and competency standards.
- The pilot will expand access to Class 3 examiners, test regional/fleet-based sign-off models, support consistent firefighter driver training, and explore ways to reduce out-of-pocket licensing expenses for volunteer firefighters.

Certification and Testing Update

- We have heard from many firefighters and fire service leaders about the importance of timely access to certification testing and the frustration caused by delays in receiving certifications.
- We are actively prioritizing this work and recognize that the current timelines have not met the expectations of the fire service community.
- To help address these challenges, additional resources have been dedicated to certification and testing activities which will reduce backlogs and ensure that certifications are issued as quickly as possible.



Clare Ground Search and Rescue

Where to Find Us

Check out our [website](#) for the latest updates.

Questions about the fire modernization process? [Contact us](#).

Follow the Department of Emergency Management on [Facebook](#) and [X](#)

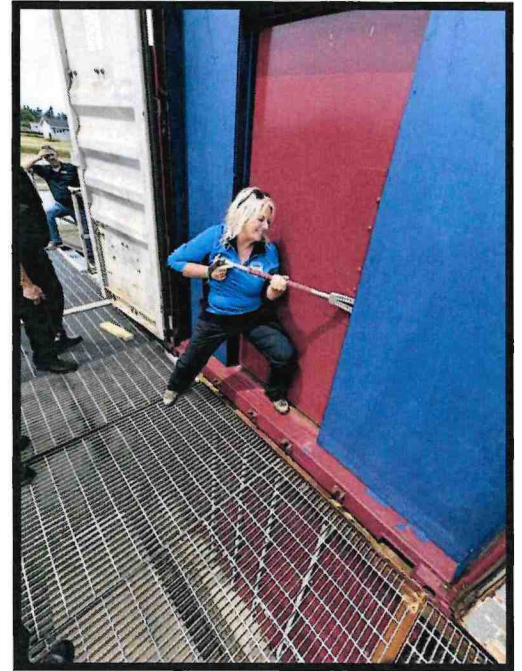
Find the Department of Natural Resources on [Facebook](#)



Fire Dispatch

- Our priority is to ensure dispatch services are safe, reliable, effective, and more consistent across the province, with the transition to Next Generation 911 which was mandated by Canada's Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), informing future planning and decisions.
- No decisions have been made on the future of fire dispatch; work is underway to develop a clear, evidence-based path forward by reviewing FSANS recommendations, current system capabilities, and leading practices across Canada and internationally.

"Breaking down doors at the fire training facility in Meteghan! As Minister of Emergency Management, I feel it is so important to meet with our fire service in their communities to listen and learn from them."



Fire Service Standards

- We are working on a step-by-step plan to develop Fire Service Standards over the next year.
- The goal of these standards is to provide clear guidance and support to enhance firefighter safety and help fire departments and municipalities deliver consistent and reliable fire services.
- Standards will be gradually phased in and developed collaboratively. Once a standard is approved, there will be a 12-month notice period before it comes into effect.
- This year, we will focus on developing standards for:
 - Firefighter Training,
 - Fire Service Levels, and
 - Fire Service Review Criteria
- The new standards will reflect recognized national best practices while being practical for Nova Scotia's diverse fire departments and volunteers.
- In the fall, we will meet with fire chiefs, municipalities, training and fire service experts, and other partners as we design and validate the draft standards.

How fire training standards are developed with firefighters





OFFICE OF THE
FIRE MARSHAL
— NOVA SCOTIA —

CAMPFIRE SAFETY

ENJOY THE OUTDOORS.
PROTECT OUR FORESTS.



1

BEFORE LIGHTING

A little preparation goes a long way.



CHECK LOCAL FIRE RESTRICTIONS.

- Burn bans and fire advisories can change quickly based on weather and wildfire conditions.
- Always follow current provincial and municipal restrictions.



CHOOSE A SAFE LOCATION.

- Use designated fire pits where available.
- Keep fires away from tents, trees, and overhanging branches.
- Never leave a campfire unattended.



HAVE WATER AND A SHOVEL NEARBY.

- Keep a bucket of water, a shovel, or other extinguishing equipment close at hand.



Check burn bans and fireworks advisories:

novascotia.ca/burnsafe

novascotia.ca/fireworks

2

WHILE THE FIRE IS BURNING

Stay attentive.
Keep it safe.



KEEP THE FIRE SMALL AND MANAGEABLE.

- A small fire is easier to control and puts off less heat, smoke, and sparks.



BURN ONLY CLEAN, DRY WOOD.

- Avoid burning garbage, food waste, or other materials that can create excessive sparks or toxic smoke.



NEVER LEAVE THE FIRE UNATTENDED.

- Always keep a responsible adult with the fire at all times.



USE CAMPING STOVES SAFELY.

- Set stoves on stable, non-combustible surfaces.
- Keep them clear of flammable materials.
- Never use fuel-burning appliances inside tents or enclosed shelters.

3

BEFORE LEAVING OR SLEEPING

Put it out.
Drown it cold.



DROWN THE FIRE WITH WATER.

- Pour water over the fire and all around the ashes.



STIR THE ASHES THOROUGHLY.

- Stir until all embers are out.



ENSURE EVERYTHING IS COOL TO THE TOUCH.

- If it's too hot to touch, it's too hot to leave.



When in doubt,
soak it, stir it,
and check it
again.

4

EMERGENCY?

Act fast.
Protect lives
and our forests.



KNOW YOUR CAMPSITE LOCATION.

- Be able to explain your location to emergency responders.



MAINTAIN ACCESS FOR EMERGENCY VEHICLES.

- Keep roads and access routes clear at all times.



CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY

- If a fire escapes containment or is threatening people, property, or the forest.

Most outdoor fires are preventable.

A few minutes spent checking conditions and properly extinguishing a campfire can help protect lives, property, and Nova Scotia's forests.



Memorandum

To: The Chair and Fire & Emergency Services Committee
From: Chris Kennedy, Fire Services coordinator
Date: September 3, 2026
Re: Fire & Emergency Services Soft Skills & Officer training update

The Municipality of the District of Lunenburg (MODL) and the Fire & Emergency Services Committee (FESC) identified recruitment and retention as a key priority within their Fire & Emergency Services Strategic Priorities. One area of focus is providing leadership and soft skills training for current and future fire service officers.

This training focuses on the people and leadership aspects of the fire service, including communication, conflict resolution, team leadership, and personnel management. While emergency incidents often require a more structured, command-based approach, day-to-day fire department operations involve managing people, addressing human resource matters, and supporting positive workplace relationships.

To support this priority, the Fire Services Coordinator engaged a facilitator who specializes in leadership development and soft skills training for fire and emergency services personnel. The training was first delivered to a mixed group of approximately 20 officers from several departments at the Municipal Services Building. Feedback was very positive, and participants suggested that department-specific sessions could provide additional benefits.

Since then, five departments have hosted training sessions at their own stations for officers and firefighters. MODL funds this program, with up to \$3,000 available annually to support delivery. Departments that have participated include Hebbville Fire Department and Italy Cross-Middlewood & District Fire Department in 2024; Conquerall Bank Fire Department and Dayspring & District Fire Department in 2025; and Riverport & District Fire Department in 2026.

To date, more than 45 officers, along with several firefighters, have completed the training. Feedback from participating departments has been consistently positive, highlighting the value of the information shared and the discussions generated during the sessions.

MODL hopes to offer another mixed-department session and continue building a network of facilitators who can provide a variety of leadership and people-management training

opportunities. This initiative demonstrates how collaboration between MODL and local fire departments can provide valuable training and support for fire service personnel.

Departments may also request financial and organizational support from the Fire Services Coordinator when planning training related to human resources management, including leadership development, respectful workplaces, and conflict resolution.

Chris Kennedy
Fire Services coordinator