

****This meeting will be held as via Microsoft Teams ONLY.****
If you have any questions, please contact Angela at (902) 930-3480.

REMO Committee Meeting Agenda
Microsoft Teams Meeting only
Monday, May 26, 2025 at 10:00 am

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- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Approval of Agenda**
- 3. Approval of Meeting Minutes for**
 - 3.1. February 10, 2025 – REMAC Meeting
 - 3.2. February 19, 2025 – All Council Meeting
 - 3.3. March 12, 2025 – REMAC Meeting
- 4. Business Arising from Notes**
 - 4.1. 2025-26 REMO Budget
- 5. New Business**
 - 5.1. Discuss next steps and tasking for Governance MOU
 - 5.2. Bonny Lea Farm Propane Leak Evacuation After Action Report 2
- 6. NS DEM Updates**
- 7. REMO Coordinator Updates**
- 8. Added Items**
- 9. Next Meeting – Monday, July 21, 2025, at 10:00 am**
- 10. Adjournment**



AFTER-ACTION REPORT

BONNY LEA FARM PROPANE LEAK EVACUATION

March 16, 2025

**Prepared by:
Lunenburg County Regional Emergency Management Organization**

**Date Presented:
May 26, 2025**



Bonny Lea Farm Propane Leak Evacuation After Action Report

Introduction

An After-Action Report (AAR) is the process of evaluating and documenting the outcomes, actions, and lessons identified to be learned from an emergency. The goal is to facilitate learning, improvement, and preparedness for future incidents.

This report was prepared by collecting information from various internal partners within the Lunenburg County Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO) relating to the Bonny Lea Farm Propane Leak that occurred on March 16, 2025. This AAR focused on the events as it pertains to Lunenburg REMO not other agencies who may have their own AAR. Lunenburg REMO provides a coordinated response to an emergency occurring within Lunenburg County and includes the Municipality of the District of Chester, the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, the Town of Bridgewater, the Town of Lunenburg, and the Town of Mahone Bay.

An event debrief was conducted via anonymous survey and was sent to the Chief Administrative Officers, Assistant Emergency Coordinators, Information Officers, and other municipal staff who are part of the REMO team. The observations and accompanying recommendations are identified and documented in this After-Action Report.

Event Summary

On Sunday, March 16, 2025, a partial virtual activation of the Lunenburg REMO Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) was initiated in response to a propane leak incident that led to the evacuation of residents within an 800-metre radius of Bonny Lea Farm. The response included coordination between emergency management personnel and units, the Fire Department Incident Commander, RCMP, Bonny Lea Farm, Chester Basin Comfort Centre, and Red Cross to manage the situation, provide support to evacuees, and ensure effective communication to the public and internal stakeholders.

- At 8:05 pm, Lunenburg REMO was copied on the fire text which stated, “Birdies Way, WINDSOR ROAD, Propane Leak, Chester.”
- At 8:56 pm the following fire text was sent, “10 Berties Way, WINDSOR ROAD, Propane Leak, Chester, Kentville, New Minas, Wolfville”.
- Upon arrival at the scene, the Chester Fire Department and RCMP made the decision to evacuate residents within 800-metres of Bonny Lea Farm.
- No request was made to Lunenburg REMO for assistance.

The Emergency Manager received a text on her personal phone from one of the HazMat responders who was enroute, asking if they knew there was an evacuation going in on Chester. That text sparked calls to gain situational awareness of what was happening and if REMO needed to become involved, which it did shortly thereafter.

Key Findings

1. ECC Partial Virtual Activation:

The ECC was partially activated, and a CAO was available for decisions. The response was led by the Emergency Manager and AECs assisted in a variety of roles.

- Strengths: Personnel were able to participate effectively from remote locations, some attendance at the comfort centres, and maintaining operational continuity without requiring in-person presence from all. Support was available from the Emergency Manager and Assistant Emergency Coordinators. Quick response from key personnel was noted as a positive aspect of the activation.
- Weaknesses: There was some ambiguity regarding the status of the activation and clarity around roles and responsibilities. Improved communication about activation status and assigned roles is recommended. Additionally, providing clearer instructions in the I Am Responding (IAR) text on whether action is required or simply monitoring is suggested.

2. I Am Responding (IAR) Notification System:

IAR is a notification system used to notify internal staff that there is an issue forthcoming. It is not used frequently so when a message comes in it is viewed as important. Not all staff watch work email or texts after hours so this can go to staff personal or work text, email or voice messages.

- Strengths: Notifications were effectively sent via text and email, ensuring that personnel received timely updates. The text notification was particularly effective in grabbing attention as emails can get missed after hours.
- Weaknesses: There was uncertainty about whether responses were required or if the notification was solely informational. Further clarification in the text about expected actions or responses is recommended. Additionally, some personnel experienced difficulties accessing the IAR app after receiving the email notification.

3. Evacuation Process:

Evacuation efforts were executed promptly by Fire Departments and RCMP following request by the Incident Commander. The Bonny Lea Farm residents evacuated to the United Baptist Church in Chester as that was their pre-determined site. Contact was made with Bonny Lea Farm. They were already safely evacuated and no support was required; communication continued until the evacuation was rescinded.

- Strengths: A comfort centre at the Chester Basin Fire Hall was successfully established, and communications were maintained with the evacuated neighbours of Bonny Lea Farm.
- Weaknesses: A couple was reportedly missed during the door-to-door notification process, suggesting a need to reinforce communication protocols and encourage neighbour check-ins during evacuations. Although this is out of scope for REMO as it was not involved in the evacuation process, it is good information to have for future evacuations. Additionally, the lack of early notification from Fire Dept to REMO regarding the evacuation call delayed the planning of comfort centres and shelter support.

3. Alert Ready System:

The Alert Ready System is a national system and is managed by the province for municipalities to use. We can send an alert to residents in Lunenburg County. Even though the response area was small, it was utilized to ensure those affected residents were aware of the issue, it also alerted many other residents not just in Lunenburg County but any towers nearby.

- Strengths: The Alert Ready system successfully delivered notifications to the public, effectively alerting residents to the evacuation order.
- Weaknesses: A delay was noted between the preparation and delivery of the alert, attributed to the need for content edits as well as a request to pause by the Fire Department. When the Fire Department confirmed it should still be sent, it was sent within minutes. The alert was still active the following morning which caused confusion as the evacuation had already been rescinded. A review of alert cancellation procedure was completed to avoid confusion in future incidents.

5. Communication:

We have an Information Officer available for web and social media posts, as well as a media request.

- Strengths: Public communication via web, social media, and internal email updates was effective and timely. Updates to elected officials were appropriately handled through CAO channels.
- Weaknesses: Internal communication at the onset of the incident was somewhat fragmented, leading to confusion about who was actively engaged in response operations. Earlier identification of active personnel and their roles could improve coordination. Recommended that if staff are unsure of who is fulfilling a role or their responsibility, they need to ask at the time in the incident.
- Weakness: Quicker approval process for factual updates that do not require senior management sign-off would streamline communication. Some staff felt they needed their manager's approval; however it was information that did not need to be handled by senior management rather the ECC position had the authority. Having consistency among the units to prevent delays.

6. General Observations:

- The incident demonstrated the importance of having personnel prepared to respond outside of regular hours.
- Coordination with the Fire Department regarding the initial evacuation notice could be improved to facilitate timely activation of comfort centres.
- Having the regional approach of staff to assist in any unit helps support given vacation and illnesses. Being mindful that not all staff can travel so having alternate any to assist is important.

Recommendations

1. Staff to review activation checklists that defines roles, responsibilities, and expectations. If staff are unsure at any time, they should ask.

2. Clarify messaging within IAR notifications to indicate whether an action is required, a response is requested, or if the message is for information only.
3. Review internal communication protocols to ensure that personnel are immediately informed of key roles during an incident.
4. Establish closer coordination with the Fire Department to ensure timely notification of REMO in cases where evacuations are ordered.
5. Consider developing a response plan for scenarios where staff may be required to respond in geographically distant areas to reduce travel time and expedite response efforts.

Conclusion

The Bonny Lea Farm Propane Leak Evacuation was an example of the successes the REMO Team experienced along with some future improvements.

This After Action Report was facilitated by the Lunenburg County Regional Emergency Management Organization Emergency Manager. Information contained within was submitted by the Chief Administrative Officers, Assistant Emergency Coordinators, and Information Officers staff from the Municipality of the District of Chester, the Municipality of the District of Lunenburg, the Town of Bridgewater, the Town of Lunenburg, and the Town of Mahone Bay.

Reviewed and accepted:

_____ Date: _____
 Tara Maguire, CAO
 Municipality of the District of Chester

_____ Date: _____
 Alex Dumaresq, Deputy CAO
 Municipality of the District of Lunenburg

_____ Date: _____
 Tammy Crowder, CAO
 Town of Bridgewater

_____ Date: _____
 Marvin MacDonald, Interim CAO
 Town of Lunenburg

_____ Date: _____
 Dylan Heide, CAO
 Town of Mahone Bay

Final report submitted to the REMO Advisory Committee on May 26, 2025.