



**REGIONAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
COMMUNICATION RESPONSE CONTINGENCY PLAN**

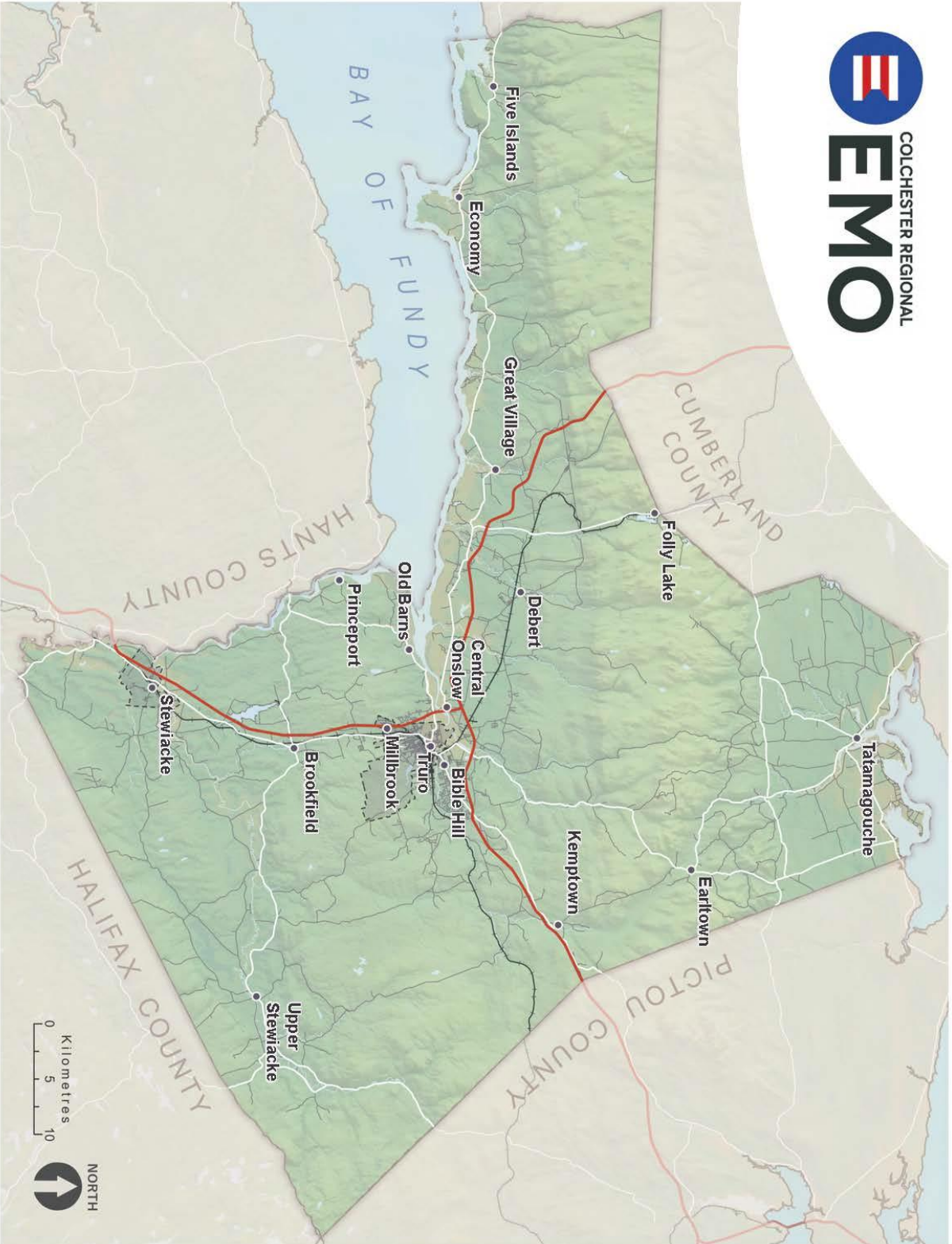


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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Our principal communication infrastructure once completely relied on hardwire copper lines that were strung along the same poles as our electrical transmission lines and from those poles the same phone lines ran into our homes and offices. These main copper wires have been replaced with fibreoptic technologies throughout most urban centres and now are reaching outward into some of the rural regions of our county.

These once phone lines are now truly communication cables as they bring phone, fax, and internet directly to us regardless of where we our direct connections are. More residential homes are transitioning away from the traditional landline connection in favour of mobile phones leaving their internet as the only communication hardwire that is connected to a physical grid.



As the reliance on mobile phones increases, so does the demand on the cellular infrastructure. To ensure that cellular towers are not overwhelmed in higher traffic areas, smaller “micro sites” are erected in designated spots to ease the demand on the conventional tower infrastructure. It should be noted that even the cellular towers and micro sites rely on fibreoptic lines, and most of our region’s cellular sites are being supported by those high-speed communication lines.

Our typical communications network will be exposed to future risks as it is expected that our seasonal storms are only going to increase in frequency and severity in the future. Over the last 20 or more years, our region as seen Hurricanes Juan, Dorian and Fiona all caused significant damage to our communication grids. Freezing rain and blizzard conditions will contribute increased weight to communication lines causing lines or transmission poles to snap. Storms are not the only risk to our communications infrastructure as wildland and major urban fires can sever communication lines impacting the public’s day to day communications or the fear of losing access to 911. The loss of connectivity during a disaster can be viewed as an emergency and the ability to communicate in the most effective means during a disaster needs to be coordinated.

This Regional Communications Response Contingency Plan is only one component of preparedness efforts that include training, exercises, and the debriefing of actual events. As our region evolves, so should the Plan, which will be regularly reviewed and adapted. Due to the nature of major emergencies, there may be a need to adapt the plan during a communication failure or how to communicate information after a disaster. Therefore, the following plan should not be seen as a final, rigid solution, but rather the foundation for continuous planning efforts.

1.2 Authorities

The authority for an evacuation is afforded by the Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act and the [Emergency Management Act](#).

The legal authority for local authorities to order an evacuation rest within the Nova Scotia Emergency

Management Act (1990) Section 14(f) – Protection of property and health or safety.

Protection of property and health or safety – Section 14

Upon a state of local emergency being declared in respect to a municipality or an area thereof, the mayor may, during the state of local emergency, in respect of such municipality or an area thereof, do everything necessary for the protection of property and the health and safety of persons therein may:

- a) Cause an emergency management plan or any part thereof to be implemented;
- b) Acquire or utilize or cause the acquisition or utilization of personal property by confiscation or any means considered necessary;
- c) Authorize or require a qualified person to render aid of such type as that person may be qualified to provide;
- d) Control or prohibit travel to or on a road, street or highway;
- e) Provide for the maintenance and restoration of essential facilities, the distribution of essential supplies and the maintenance and coordination of emergency medical, social and other essential services;
- f) Cause or order the evacuation of persons and the removal of livestock and personal property threatened by an emergency and make arrangements for the adequate care and protection thereof;
- g) Authorize the entry by a person into any building or upon land without warrant;
- h) Cause or order the demolition or removal of any thing where the demolition or removal is necessary or advisable for the purpose of reaching the scene of an emergency, or attempting to forestall its occurrence or of combating its progress;
- i) Order the assistance of persons needed to carry out provisions mentioned in this Section;
- j) Regulate the distribution and availability of essential goods, services and resources;
- k) Authorize and make emergency payments;
- l) Assess damage to any works, property or undertaking and the costs to repair, replace or restore the same;
- m) Assess damage to the environment and the costs and methods to eliminate or alleviate the damage.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to outline the procedures that will be used in a widespread communications failure event or how to disseminate critical information after a disaster that necessitates the need for effective communications within Colchester County. The plan is designed to be implemented as a support emergency plan to the Colchester Regional Emergency Coordination Centre or if a cascading communication breakdown in our region is determined to be of a significant time-period. The monitoring and preparation phases will be coordinated by Colchester REMO in preparation to assist and liaison with emergency and essential services.

This Plan should be activated as soon as it becomes evident that, due to an emergency of such significance as to warrant its activation.

1.4 Objective and Scope

The primary goal of this Plan is to provide a planning framework that identifies the role of individual residents, business owners, emergency responders and the Municipalities of Colchester County.

This objective is supported by primary goals of enhancing public and emergency responder education, emergency preparedness and emergency response guidelines. Together these are intended to prevent or reduce loss of life or severe injury and/or damage to property and infrastructure during a communications failure event within the Colchester County region.

1.5 Importance and Functions

Emergency communication is critical information that could mean the difference between life and death. It becomes as essential as food and water to the community. It can provide reassurance that response and recovery are occurring.

Emergency public information can serve many important functions. It can:

- Save lives and reduce injury. Knowing the appropriate and proper actions to take enables the population to reduce their risks.
- Protect property and the environment. Mitigating risk to property and the environment may lessen the damage caused by an emergency event.
- Facilitate the planned response by calming fears and attempting to manage expectations. If the population knows what to expect, they are more likely to follow instructions and allow emergency response agencies to perform their duties.
- Educate and inform. An educated public is more likely to prepare for emergencies and be ready when they occur.
- Seek the public's cooperation. Whether the need is for volunteer help, citizen's cooperation, or residents to evacuate their homes, emergency public information is a device that can make it happen.
- Instill public confidence. Providing timely, accurate and understandable information builds confidence in the emergency management's ability to manage the emergency event.
- Provide information to assist individuals and families. Information about registration centres, comfort centres and/or shelters can support the public by directing them to the closest open facility and if families are separated from loved ones, it enables connections to be re-established. These linkages enable the public to move forward with their recovery.

2.0 THEORY OF OPERATION

2.1 Presumptions

The Regional Emergency Management Communications Response Contingency Plan must make some presumptions to be true for the plan's enactment.

- Colchester REMO and the Emergency Coordination Centre staff will have the primary responsibility for mitigation, prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery in emergency/disaster situations.
- It is highly probable that with events such as climate change and weather anomalies, Colchester County could experience a major communications event to some degree in the future.

- In the event of communications failure, all impacted service providers will be working on identifying the source of the failures and implementing strategies on restorations.
- That the Emergency Coordination Centre Staff can operate the alternative communication platforms used during an activation.
- That the Truro Amateur Radio Club (TARC) can operate their communications platforms.

2.2 Plan Limitations

- The Municipalities of Colchester County do not currently have any formal documents with communication service providers. While efforts will be made to address restoration of communication infrastructure to the residents, critical municipal infrastructure must be the priority to ensure continuity of municipal services to the community.
- Residents of the Colchester County region may not be aware of the types of communications options that have the least impact on overwhelmed cellular networks.
- There may be factors that will negatively affect the Municipalities of Colchester County's ability to respond to communication failures. Alternate forms of communication devices are not immediately available and there may be challenges in getting the additional resources tasked due to roads become impassable from downed lines or broken structures.

2.3 Plan Activation

This plan may be activated in whole or in part, as required, by the Colchester REMO Emergency Coordination Centre staff, with or without the formal declaration of a state of local emergency.

Upon activation, all participating agencies should respond in accordance with the procedures described within this plan and in accordance with their agency operating procedures.

2.4 Communication Platforms

2.4.1 Landlines and Voice Over Intranet Protocols (VOIP)

Traditionally the description of a landline is often referred to a direct line comprised of copper that connected a structure to the transmission lines that travelled from utility pole to pole. While these copper lines may be more prevalent in rural areas of our county, the urban centres have seen the copper wires replaced by fibre optics. When the older copper lines are replaced by fibre optics, the structure's dedicated landline phones are converted into voice over internet protocol (VOIP) using hardware installed within the building. The conversion to fibre allows for an expanded communication capacity with a much smaller infrastructure investment. Regardless of the type of communication infrastructure, the roadside transmission lines are still at risk from severe storms, fires, vandalism, or vehicle collisions.

When calling 911 via a phone that is using VOIP, the caller may be initially routed through another vendor before the call is transferred to a provincial public safety answering point (PSAP).

2.4.2 Cellular

Colchester has approximately 70 cellular towers and a significant number of "micro" sites scattered throughout every corner of the county. At the present these towers are owned by three major providers that include Bell, Eastlink, and Rogers. The current trend has most consumers dropping their landlines and relying entirely on their mobile devices for telecommunication. This type of network affords the users throughout much of the region access to real time communications.

Cellular networks are facing capacity challenges as more and more mobile devices are sold and made network operatable that there is probability of device use will outpace the infrastructure capability. This was evident during the early wave of the COVID pandemic when many people were staying home, and their device use increased causing “busy” signals at times when mobile phone calls were being placed. The other challenge arises after a 911 call is placed is with the geolocate function. The cellular tower that the mobile phone is associated with is identified and most times the geolocation of the mobile phone is placed with a determined distance to georeferenced cellular tower.

2.4.3 Satellite Phones

Currently, the province of Nova Scotia has supplied each municipal EMO with a satellite (SAT) phone along with a variety of other accessories including external antenna and vehicle adaptor. The SAT phone is tested at a minimum once every 3 months with a call into the provincial agency, Public Safety and Field Communications (PSFC). In addition to the local EMO SAT phone, other agencies within our region also have SAT phones assigned or have access to the phones. They include the local Ground Search and Rescue team, RCMP and provincial agencies.

These phones are a fall-back communication link; however, they are a limited resource.

2.4.4 Satellite Internet

Satellite internet is wireless internet beamed down from satellites orbiting the Earth. It’s a lot different from land-based internet services like cable or a digital subscriber line (DSL), which transmit data through wires running underground or along the conventional electricity infrastructure (above ground power poles).

Roughly 22,000 miles above the surface of the Earth, satellites used in traditional satellite internet service hover over the equator. They rotate with the planet, so the signal relay stays consistent. This is called a geostationary orbit. This allows for two-way data communication between your dish and the provider hub. Often the information must travel so far, you may notice more latency (also called lag) than you might with DSL or cable internet, but advances in technology have made the satellite internet today much faster than it used to be. At about 300 miles above the Earth, next-generation satellites are much closer to the Earth. These satellites are launched into low-Earth orbit (LEO). Due to their closer proximity, next-generation satellites can provide customers with faster internet speeds and lower latency than previous satellite internet services. But the downside is the satellites can’t cover as wide an area as satellites in geostationary orbit, so thousands of LEO satellites are needed to deliver the same coverage area as two or three traditional satellites. Starlink (SpaceX) has emerged as a significant provider within Canada over the past few years offering broadband internet to residential and commercial customers in rural regions of the province.

2.4.5 Trunked Mobile Radios, Very High Frequency (VHF) Radios and Amateur Radio

The province has the best radio infrastructure in North American primarily due its robust interoperability capabilities. This communication platform is known as the trunked mobile radio (TMR) and it is utilized by provincial departments, fire and police services, paramedics, bylaw enforcement, ground search and rescue and nongovernment agencies like Red Cross. The TMR system is managed by the PSFC, and they have the capacity and expertise to support emergency operations with logistical support in the field with ground support units and caches of additional radios. The PSFC also is the principal agency for providing

training on the use and capability of the communication platform. Our Regional EMO has access to two base radios and several portable TMRs.

All fire services in Colchester can communicate across another radio platform which operates in the Very High Frequency (VHF). These radios share common repeater and simplex channels which allows for all the fire services to communicate with themselves, and the two fire dispatch providers located in Truro (Truro Dispatch) and Kentville (Valley Dispatch). The Regional EMO has two base radios and a portable in operation. The Town of Truro and the Municipality of Colchester have VHF radios in their Public Works vehicles and operational supervisors have access to portable radios. The Town of Stewiacke's Public Works Department also utilizes VHF radios in their vehicles, however currently there are no portable radios on their network.

Our region is fortunate to have a local amateur radio club within Colchester County. The Truro Amateur Radio Club (TARC) has been an essential entity in our Regional EMO. Their services are so vital to our emergency management program that they have been assigned a dedicated radio room in our Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC). The club's long service has provided not only a fall-back communication link to our region and beyond, but they have expanded on the traditional analog radio platforms by expanding voice transmissions on digital and internet communication infrastructure and now compliment those with a new technology, Winlink Global Radio Email. This program can provide worldwide radio email using radio pathways where the internet is not present.

2.4.6 Mass Notification Software

The ability to communicate to a large population is critical during an emergency. Nationally there is a public alerting system known as Alert Ready that is overseen in the province by EMO Nova Scotia. This platform has an ability to transmit public alerts to the public via existing media infrastructure (tv, radio, cell phones, RSS feeds, The Weather Network). This wide scope alerting can coordinate communication to the public by emergency management stakeholders during an emergency or serious event. The Alert Ready program can communicate two types of messaging; broadcast immediate alerts and non-broadcast immediate alerts. Broadcast immediate alerts are for imminent threat to life & property (immediate & observed). There are currently thirty-two (32) identified broadcast immediate alerts which are 911 service disruption, amber alerts, wildland fires, civil emergencies, air quality, and hurricanes to name a few. These types of alerts will be transmitted across all media platforms like tv, radio and cell phones. Non-broadcast immediate alerts are for alerts that are not immediate and/or observed and like road/bridge closures, food/drug supply, public services, and utilities for example. Non-broadcast immediate alerts are not transmitted across all media platforms but are published on RSS feeds and apps like the Weather Network. Alert Ready messaging has many protections to ensure that nonemergency management stakeholders cannot broadcast fictitious emergencies to the public.

Fire services in Colchester County and their dispatch centres all share a mass notification software known as lamResponding (laR) which allows for their dispatch centres to communicate with fire services on emergency notifications via an app, text message and/or email. This platform can also share critical information to all fire service personnel or to an individual fire service.

The Town of Truro has implemented another mass notification platform, Truro Connect, which is a program that residents can subscribe to. This platform can notify those who have subscribed to receive emergency alerts, public advisories, and public engagement announcements.

2.4.7 Social Media Networks

Social media platforms have a far-reaching ability to communicate information to the public. Each municipal entity in Colchester publishes information across a variety of platforms that include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and/or Youtube in addition to their own websites. During emergencies, emergency management staff attempt to monitor all municipal social media platforms to ensure that only official messaging is published as it is gathered and vetted. If a serious event or emergency occurs, the public is asked to monitor municipal sites for the most accurate information available. It is unfortunate, but during a crisis, inaccurate information often circulates rapidly across social media platforms which can contribute to the severity of the event.

In June 2023, social media platforms Meta (Facebook and Instagram) and Google began blocking Canadian news feeds in response to Canada's new Online News Act which passed in June. The effect of blocking of news feeds on social media when a disaster occurs may pose challenges for emergency management personnel. The Government of Canada have reached an agreement with Google in November 2023 about sharing news media.

2.4.8 Electric Message Boards

Our region has seen an increase in the installation of digital electronic message boards at schools, municipal buildings, fire stations, across major highways, and at commercial businesses. During an emergency or a disaster, entities with electronic messages boards may be asked if they could assist in providing critical information to the public. The Colchester REMO understands that most of these types of signs are owned and operated by a variety of nonemergency management agencies, however it is hoped that during an event, that those sign owners would assist Colchester REMO if requests were asked.

2.4.9 Radio Stations, Television Networks and Print Media

Colchester has been fortunate over the years that it once had a local daily newspaper and there were local television reporters in the northern region for CBC and CTV. As time went on, the regional television reporters were replaced by a pool of provincial news staffs based in Halifax. The well-loved local newspaper, the Truro Daily News had a pool of local reporters and was even printed in their building located on Louise Street in Truro. Trends in how the news is reported and circulated saw the local paper be reduced to only a weekly periodical. During an emergency or disaster, reporters will cover the event however it will be more challenging to get information circulated when it is required.

The region's first radio station (CKCL) first broadcasted in 1947 across the AM frequency. In 1965, a second radio station came on air and over time they both became owned by one entity and now known as Pure County (CKTY) and Bounce (CKTO). Both stations have a far-reaching broadcast footprint and have on-air personnel from 6am to about 7pm during the weekdays. These stations have been essential over the years as they have aired public service announcements (PSAs) during critical events that have impacted Colchester County. Hope FM (CINU) is local private radio station that has a small broadcast footprint but has been in operation since 2003. During an emergency, consideration needs to be noted that due to the topology challenges, additional radio stations outside the county may need to be sought for PSAs in during an event.

2.4.10 Public Address Systems

Often considered an outdated method of getting information circulated, it is a standing true method of advising neighbourhoods of emergencies. Nearly every fire apparatus or police vehicle has a public address (PA) capability. If required, emergency vehicles could travel the streets and roads of a

neighbourhood or region providing critical information about evacuation routes or approaching dangers. This communication method has its challenges as the messages need to be very clear and concise as well it may not be effective for the hearing impaired population.

2.5 Challenges of Emergency Communication During an Emergency

Communication during an emergency is different than routine communications that are often released by municipal units. The release of emergency information has a specific purpose and that is to prompt a specific response from the public rather than raising awareness.

Emergency communication often encounters barriers. The barriers are formed as it is more difficult for people to hear the messages during an emergency. The difficulty is from the stress, change in routine and the lack of sleep which are all complications that need to be overcome when communicating during an emergency. Language and literacy are additional barriers that need to be considered. With regards to language, our region has seen growth in immigration, temporary foreign workers, exchange students and international enrollments at the local community college and university. These populations tend to have English as their second language, and this may pose a challenge when emergency communications are being disseminated. Literacy factors may cause barriers as it impacts how the messages are understood.

People with disabilities may face challenges in receiving any emergency communications. Individuals with hearing, visual or developmental disabilities and those with mental health concerns or older frail seniors may not have the ability to receive, interrupt and react to the instructions presented via an emergency alert.

2.5.1 Public Reception

The information relayed as emergency communication has several factors that impact on how the population receives and responds to the message. These factors are directly linked to the population's individual characteristics, their perceptions and message source but the principal factor is the message itself.

- Individual characteristics of the population include age, education, language, family composition, pets, length of residency, functional needs, and the level of preparedness among others. These features all influence the population's ability to react and respond to emergency communications.
- Perceptions of the population are what past experiences have they encountered and the sensitivities of proximity and risk. People will make a quick assessment of the relative safety of their location, creating an emergency perception of risk. If their observation of personal risk is high, they will act quickly. If the observation of personal risk is low, the reaction is delayed.
- Message source is about credibility and level of trust on who is issuing the message.
- The message itself must be accurate, clear, consistent, timeliness and specific. It needs to focus on the immediate needs.

2.5.2 Public Credibility

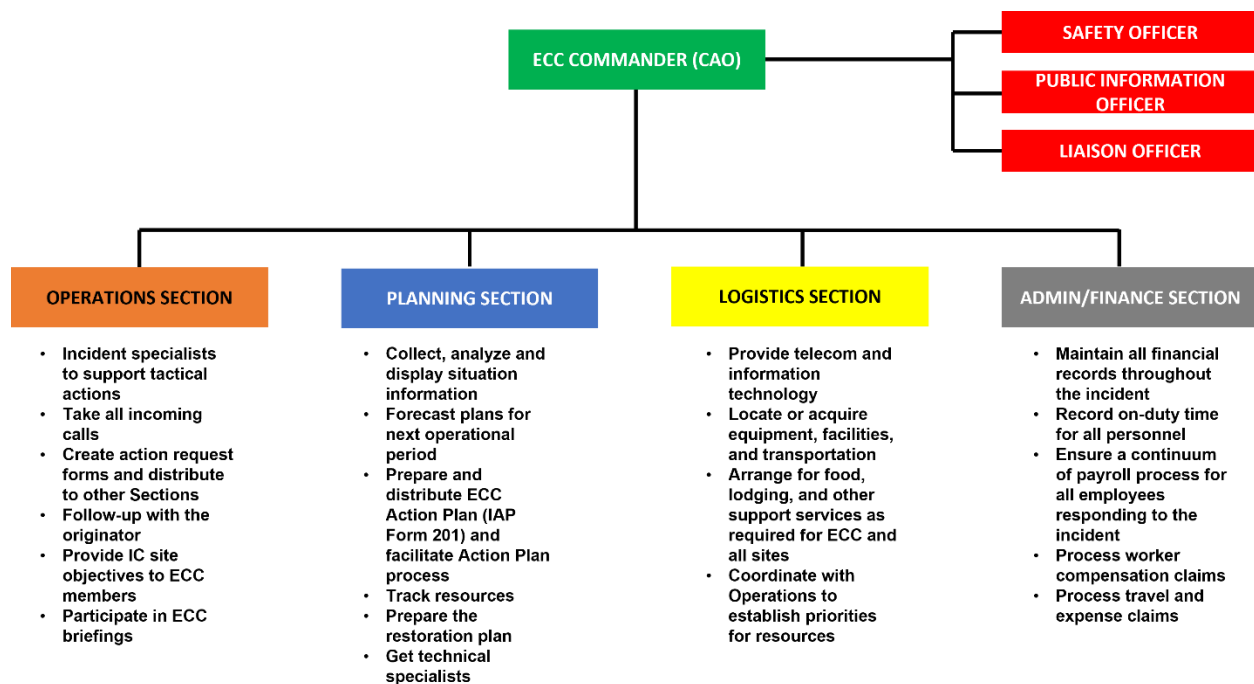
Emergency communications must be timely, appropriate, and perceived as being from a trusted source. If an official answer is not available, rumor and speculation quickly fill the information void. The void then

becomes filled with whomever chooses to populate it and then the emergency management team must disseminate correct information but also counter any misinformation that has been circulated.

It is ever so vital to be view as a creditable source of information during an emergency especially when critical messaging is required at the onset of the event, during the event and equally as recovery measures begin to develop.

2.6 Communications within the Colchester REMO Activation Organizational Structure

To support any incident within our region, the Colchester REMO Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) is structured under the Incident Command System. Communications utilized by emergency responders and the ECC during an event, will be tracked and documented under Logistics. Any public emergency communications will be done by the Public Information Officer.



3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Federal

The Government of Canada's Operation Centre (GOC) coordinates the federal government's response to events of national interest, such as wildfires, weather events or man-made emergencies, that may affect the safety and security of Canadians or critical infrastructure. Should a provincial or territorial government request assistance to deal with an emergency, then the GOC would coordinate the Government of Canada response.

The Government of Canada has disaster assistance programs available to respond to the financial needs of provinces and territories in the wake of major natural disasters including the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements.

3.2 Provincial

Several Nova Scotia government departments and agencies are engaged during an emergency that may have communication failures or challenges, including:

3.2.1 Emergency Management Office

EMO NS takes an “all-hazards” approach to emergency management that recognizes that prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery can be used to address the impact of disasters.

EMO regional staff (Emergency Management Planning Officers - EMPO's) work with municipal emergency management coordinators to ensure there are emergency management plans in place for each municipality in Nova Scotia. Municipal planning and local knowledge are represented in the development of emergency management plans.



3.2.2 Public Safety and Field Communications (PSFC)

The PSFC group is the provincial agency that supplies municipal EMOs with satellite phones and trunked mobile radios (TMR) to use during emergencies or if conventional communication platforms cannot be utilized. Along with the communication assets, the group has highly trained specialized personnel that provide pre-event training or in the field assistance with advanced support vehicles. PSFC has Duty Officers available to respond as required.



3.3 Municipal and Regional

3.3.1 Prevention and Mitigation

Colchester County has a very robust topography that spans from the Cobequid Bay and upland over the Cobequid Mountains to the Northumberland Strait and inland along the Stewiacke River valley. Our natural geography can provide communication challenges as there are regions that do have weak or non-existent cellular coverage. In addition to cellular lapses, there are pockets within the county that experience VHF and TMR drops for the emergency responders. During an emergency these communication barriers may cause delays in notifying residents during emergencies. The emergency management group in Colchester has attempted to identify those regions and seek solutions to ensure that emergency communication and notifications reach every resident and visitor in Colchester County.

The three municipalities share in a regional collaboration regarding Emergency Management which is known as Colchester Regional Emergency Management Organization (Colchester REMO). This approach

allows for emergency planning and the creation of emergency management planning documents and public education resources designed specifically for our residents and region.

3.3.2 Response and Recovery

When a disaster or significant event occurs, the initial responsibility for the welfare of residents is at the Municipal level. As with any emergency, the priority is responder and public safety and those are ensured with the use of emergency communication platforms and emergency public notification.

When an emergency occurs within Colchester County, Colchester REMO should:

- Activate the Colchester REMO Regional Emergency Management Plan.
- Activate the Colchester REMO Regional Communication Response Contingency Plan.
- Activate all appropriate Colchester REMO emergency plans.
- Convene the Emergency Coordination Centre Management Team.
- Appoint an Emergency Coordinator Centre Commander.
- If warranted, recommend the declaration of a Municipal emergency.
- Direct and control all emergency response operations in Colchester County.
- Coordinate the acquisition of emergency response equipment, personnel and other resources required at the incident site.
- Coordinate assistance to residents displaced by wildfire.
- Disseminate vital emergency information to staff, the media and citizens using appropriate channels.
- Provide information to the public concerning the emergency and protective actions to be taken.
- Request assistance from agencies not under Municipal control, as required (i.e. volunteer agencies, Red Cross, PSFC).
- Request Provincial assistance to when required.

3.3.3 Regional Emergency Management Coordinator (REMC)

Coordinate emergency specific education materials for distribution to the public within identified areas to include:

- Any appropriate emergency management plan.
- Ensuring up to date contact information for emergency use including local media and provincial agency duty officers.
- Emergency preparedness and response education information for the public including pre-event, during an event, and post event.

3.3.4 Site Operations (Incident Commander)

The Incident Commander (IC) assumes responsibility for the overall coordination of all operations at the emergency site and is the point of contact between the ECC Management Team and site operations.

The Incident Commander is responsible for:

- Identifying the incident risk areas.

- Prioritizing response activities.
- Evaluating and identifying equipment and resources needed.

3.3.5 Fire Services

- Conduct rescue, as required.
- Rescue/evacuate any persons in danger with minimum delay and provide medical first response (MFR) service as necessary.
- Assist Police Services with evacuations in the affected areas as required.
- Fire suppression, mitigate released chemicals and other hazards.

3.3.6 Colchester RCMP/Truro Police Service

- Evacuate the affected areas as required.
- Perform traffic and crowd control operations.
- Disperse people not directly connected with the operations who, by their presence, are in danger, or whose presence hinders in any way the efficient functioning of the emergency control operation.
- Secure the affected areas (based on need and availability of staff).
- Provide community security to prevent against looting and other unruly activities.
- Identify and establish detour routes due to the emergency and maintain proper traffic flow patterns as deemed appropriate.

3.3.7 Infrastructure Services - Water/Wastewater

- Implement actions to protect water and sewer systems and identify threats to drinking water.
- Work with ECC Information Officer to advise the public of protective actions that may be required in the event of damage or concerns related to the sewer systems and/or drinking water sources.

3.3.8 Transportation

- Organize transportation as required for residents and emergency responders.
- Coordinate private companies and local Centres of Education transportation resources to address the transportation needs.

3.3.9 Social Services

- Aid residents displaced by the emergency as required.
- Coordinate emergency facilities (i.e. emergency shelter operations, evacuation centres).

3.3.10 Utilities

- Perform disconnect operations where this is considered necessary and in the interest of public safety.
- Work with ECC Information Officer to advise the public of protective actions that may be required in the event of damage or concerns relating to the utility impacts and restoration of services.

4.0 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION CHARACTERISTICS

To be effective, Emergency Communication Notifications should have the following characteristics:

Authority—Warnings are more credible and more likely to promote appropriate public actions if they are issued by a recognized authority.

Consistency—To avoid confusion and uncertainty, it is important that consistency be maintained when multiple warnings are issued to the public.

Accuracy—Accuracy and currency of information contained in the warning also affect understanding and belief. Errors can cause people to doubt subsequent warnings.

Clarity—An unclear warning can cause people to misunderstand or ignore it. Warnings should be in simple language, without the use of jargon.

Level of Certainty—Certainty determines the level of belief in a warning and affects decision making by those to whom the warning is given.

Level of Detail—Insufficient information creates confusion, uncertainty, and anxiety, and public imagination will tend to fill the information void. This can promote rumours, uninformed misconceptions, or fears.

Clear Guidance— Messages containing clear guidance about protective actions people should take and the time available for doing so are more effective than those which provide no specific instructions.

Repetition of Warnings—Where time permits, warnings should be repeated preferably using more than one delivery method. This provides confirmation of the warning message, helps increase persuasiveness and overcomes the problem of people not responding after hearing a warning only once.

Impact Areas—Warning information that clearly states the areas actually or likely to be affected by the event is most effective.

Methods of Information Broadcasting—Warnings are more effective if a range of methods is used rather than a single method, thereby reaching as many people as possible in the shortest time. Methods need to be chosen to fit the time-frame available and should recognize that some modes are appropriate in reaching many people but with only relatively simple or generalized information (i.e. media) whereas others can provide more specific information to targeted individuals (i.e. telephone, two-way radio, door-knocking or use of community leaders). Use of mass notification software “Alert Ready” can enhance the effectiveness of electronic media warnings by alerting listeners for an urgent safety message to follow.

Information Broadcasting for Special Needs Groups—Consideration must be given to the specific problems of special needs groups. Distribution to, and receipt of information by, many of these groups will pose different challenges, for example, language. Neighbours can also help by checking on special-needs people in their proximity.

5.0 PLAN EVALUATION, REVIEW & MAINTENANCE

5.1 Plan Evaluation and Responsibilities

The Colchester Regional Emergency Management Coordinator (REMC) is responsible for coordinating the exercising of the Regional Emergency Management Communication Response Contingency Plan. This Plan will be evaluated and compiled biennially.

5.2 Plan Maintenance and Responsibilities

The Colchester Regional Emergency Management Communication Response Contingency Plan will be maintained by the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee (REMPC) and the Regional Emergency Management Coordinator (REMC).

The Plan will be reviewed biennially and, where necessary, revised by a meeting(s) of the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee (REMPC) and the Regional Emergency Management Advisory Committee (REMAC). The Regional Emergency Management Communication Response Contingency shall be revised subject to the approval of Municipal Councils.

6.0 PLAN DISTRIBUTION

Distributed electronically:

Municipal Units

- Municipality of Colchester
- Town of Truro
- Town of Stewiacke
- Village of Bible Hill
- Village of Tatamagouche

Fire and Emergency Services

- Colchester County Fire Services and Special Hazards Response Unit (SHRU)
- Truro Fire Service
- Stewiacke Fire Department
- Truro Police Service
- Colchester RCMP
- Colchester Ground Search and Rescue

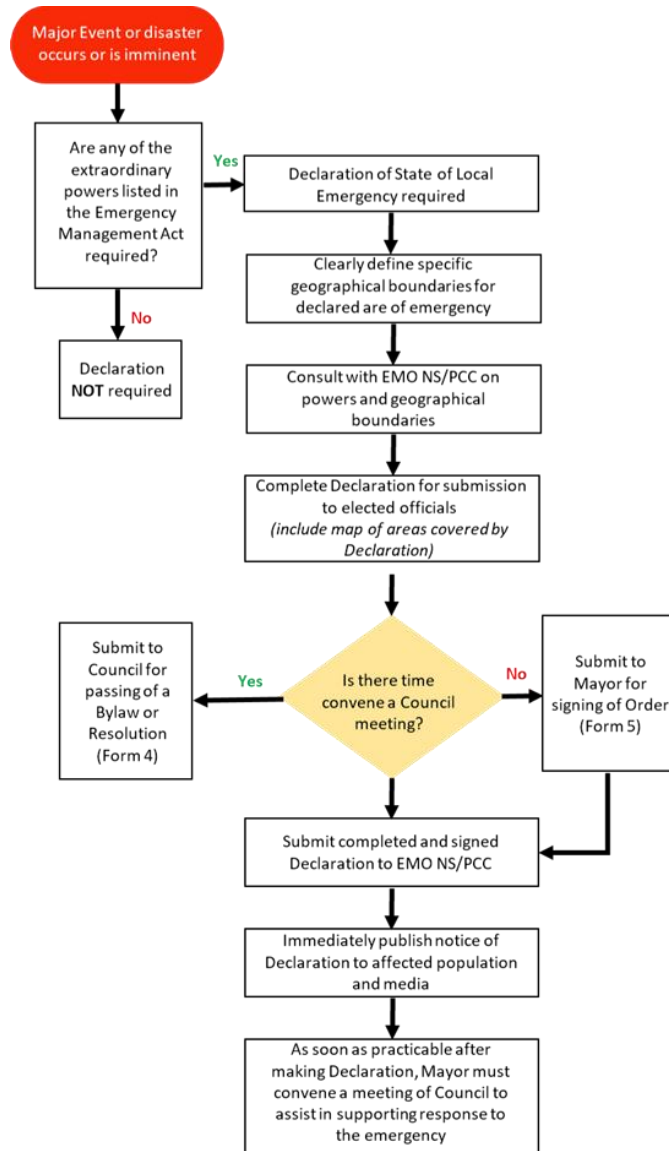
Colchester Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee members

Colchester Regional Emergency Management Advisory Committee members

ANNEXES

Annex A – Declaring a State of Local Emergency (SOLE)

(Reference: [Nova Scotia Emergency Management Act](#))



1. Acquire or utilize personal property by confiscation or any means considered necessary.
2. Authorize or require a qualified person to render aid.
3. Control or prohibit travel.
4. Provide for the maintenance and restoration of essential facilities, the distribution of essential supplies and the maintenance and co-ordination of emergency medical, social and other essential services.
5. Cause or order evacuation of persons.
6. Authorize entry by a person into any building or upon land without warrant.
7. Cause or order the demolition or removal of any thing where the demolition or removal is necessary or advisable for the purpose of reaching the scene of an emergency.
8. Order the assistance of persons needed.
9. Regulate the distribution and availability of essential goods, services and resources.
10. Authorize and make emergency payments.
11. Assess damage to any works, property or undertaking and costs to repair, replace or restore the same.
12. Assess damage to environment and costs and methods to eliminate or alleviate the damage.

Annex B – State of Local Emergency Forms (SOLE)

FORM 4

DECLARATION A STATE OF LOCAL EMERGENCY

Municipality: _____

Section 12(2) of the *Emergency Management Act*, S.N.S 1990, c.8

WHEREAS the area herein described is or may soon be encountering an emergency that requires prompt action to protect property or health, safety or welfare of persons therein:

Emergency Area:

The area generally described as

Province of Nova Scotia (hereafter referred to as the "Designated Area(s)") Yes () No ()

Nature of the Emergency

AND WHEREAS the undersigned is satisfied that an emergency as defined in Section 2(b) of Chapter 8 of the Statutes of Nova Scotia, 1990, the *Emergency Management Act*, exists or may exist in the Designated Area(s) noted above;

THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY DECLARES pursuant to Section 12(2) of the *Emergency Management Act*, a State of Local Emergency in the Municipality noted above as of and from _____ o'clock in the forenoon () or afternoon () of the day of _____, 20____ .

THIS DECLARATION OF STATE OF LOCAL EMERGENCY shall exist until o'clock in the forenoon () or afternoon () of the day of _____, 20____, or for a maximum of 7 days from the date and time specified above unless the Declaration is renewed or terminated as provided in Section 20 of the *Emergency Management Act*.

DATED at _____, in the Municipality of _____, Province of Nova Scotia, this day of _____, 20____ .

Council, Municipality _____

Name _____

Positions _____

[Authorized by Resolution No. _____

dated the Day of _____, 20____]

FORM 5

DECLARATION A STATE OF LOCAL EMERGENCY

Municipality: _____

Section 12(2) of the *Emergency Management Act*, S.N.S 1990, c.8

WHEREAS the area herein described is or may soon be encountering an emergency that requires prompt action to protect property or health, safety or welfare of persons therein:

Emergency Area:

The area generally described as

Province of Nova Scotia (hereafter referred to as the "Designated Area(s)") Yes () No ()

Nature of the Emergency

AND WHEREAS the undersigned is satisfied that an emergency as defined in Section 2(b) of Chapter 8 of the Statutes of Nova Scotia, 1990, the *Emergency Management Act*, exists or may exist in the Designated Area(s) noted above;

AND WHEREAS the Council of the Municipality is unable to act;

AND WHEREAS the undersigned has (check appropriate box)

- a) Consulted with a majority of members of the Municipal Emergency Management Committee Yes () No ()
- b) Found it impractical to consult with the majority of the Municipal Emergency Management Committee Yes () No ()

THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY DECLARES pursuant to Section 12(2) of the *Emergency Management Act*, a State of Local Emergency in the Municipality noted above as of and from _____ o'clock in the forenoon () or afternoon () of the day of _____, 20____ .

THIS DECLARATION OF STATE OF LOCAL EMERGENCY shall exist until o'clock in the forenoon () or afternoon () of the day of _____, 20____, or for a maximum of 7 days from the date and time specified above unless the Declaration is renewed or terminated as provided in Section 20 of the *Emergency Management Act*.

DATED at _____, in the Municipality of _____, Province of Nova Scotia, this day of _____, 20____ .

Mayor Signature _____
Municipality _____

FORM 6

RENEWAL OF A STATE OF LOCAL EMERGENCY

Municipality: _____

Section 20 (2) of the *Emergency Management Act*, S.N.S 1990, c.8

WHEREAS the area herein described is or may soon be encountering an emergency that requires prompt action to protect property or health, safety or welfare of persons therein:

Emergency Area:

The area generally described as

Province of Nova Scotia (hereafter referred to as the "Designated Area(s)") Yes () No ()

Nature of the Emergency

AND WHEREAS the declaration of a state of Local Emergency was signed on the _____ day of _____, 20____;

AND WHEREAS the undersigned is satisfied that an emergency as defined in Section 2(b) of Chapter 8 of the statutes of Nova Scotia, 1990, the *Emergency Management Act*, exists or may exist in the Designated Area(s) noted above;

THE UNDERSIGNED HEREBY DECLARES pursuant to Section 20(2) of the *Emergency Management Act*, a State of Local Emergency in the Municipality noted above is renewed as of and from _____ o'clock in the forenoon () or afternoon () of the day of _____, 20____ .

THE RENEWAL OF A DECLARATION OF STATE OF LOCAL EMERGENCY shall exist until o'clock in the forenoon () or afternoon () of the day of _____, 20____, or for a maximum of 7 days from the date and time specified above unless the Declaration is renewed or terminated as provided in Section 20 of the *Emergency Management Act*.

DATED at _____, in the Municipality of _____, Province of Nova Scotia, this day of _____, 20____ .

Council, Municipality _____
Name _____
Positions _____

In the event the Council is unable to act:
Mayor _____

[Authorized by Resolution No. _____
dated the Day of _____, 20____]

FORM 7

TERMINATION OF A STATE OF LOCAL EMERGENCY

Municipality: _____

Section 18(2) of the *Emergency Management Act*, S.N.S 1990, c.8

WHEREAS by Declaration of a State of Local Emergency date the _____ day of _____, 20____, as renewed on the _____ day of _____, 20____, a State of Local Emergency was declared for the following area:

Emergency Area:

The area generally described as

Province of Nova Scotia (hereafter referred to as the "Designated Area(s)") Yes () No ()

Nature of the Emergency

AND WHEREAS the undersigned is of the opinion that the emergency no longer exists in the Designated Area(s).

THE UNDERSIGNED pursuant to Section 18(2) of Chapter 8 of the Statutes of Nova Scotia, 1990, the *Emergency Management Act*, hereby terminates the State of Local Emergency effective as of and from _____ o'clock in the forenoon () or afternoon () of the day of _____, 20____.

DATED at _____, in the Municipality of _____, Province of Nova Scotia, this day of _____, 20____.

Council of Municipality _____
Name _____
Positions _____
[Authorized by Resolution No. _____
dated the Day of _____, 20____]

Annex C – TMR Municipal EMO Reference Card

Zone A	Zone B	Zone C
ALERT	EHS-VOLS	NS MA 1
EMOSOUTH	AMT AIR	NS MA 2
EMO WEST	AMT SIM	NS MA 3
EMO CENT	HAZMAT	NS MA 4
EMO EAST	DISASTER	NS MA 5
EMO ALL1	RCMP-VOL	NS MA 6
EMO ALL2	ALERT	NS MA 7
GSAR-ALL	PATCH 1	NS MA 8
S-DISP A	PATCH 2	COMMON 1
S-DISP B	PATCH 3	COMMON 2
W-DISP A	ADMIN-S1	CONV RP1
W-DISP B	ADMIN-W1	CONV RP2
N-DISP A	ADMIN-N1	SX ALL 1
N-DISP B	ADMIN-E1	SX ALL 2
E-DISP A	ADMIN-E1	SX ALL 3
E-DISP B	ADMIN-E1	SX PNS

Annex D – TMR Fire Service Northern Region Reference Card

Z7	Z8	Z9
N-DISP A	MFR-N	NS MA 1
FD-OPS29	AMT AIR	NS MA 2
FD-OPS30	AMT SIM	NS MA 3
FD-OPS31	RCMP-VOL	NS MA 4
FD-OPS32	SHUBIE	NS MA 5
FD-OPS33	PATCH 1	NS MA 6
FD-OPS34	PATCH 2	NS MA 7
FD-OPS35	PATCH 3	NS MA 8
FD-OPS36	DNR-VFD1	COMMON 1
FD-OPS37	DNR-VFD2	COMMON 2
FD-OPS38	DNR-VFD3	CONV RP1
FD-OPS39	DNR-VFD4	CONV RP2
FD-OPS40	HFX IES3	SX ALL 1
FD-OPS41	HAZMAT	SX ALL 2
FD-OPS42	ADMIN-N1	SX ALL 3
N-DISP B	ADMIN-N2	SX VFD

Annex E – Important Numbers

NSP Power Outage
1-877-428-6004

Forest Fires/Poaching/Wildlife Emergencies
1-800-565-2224

Bell Aliant Outage
611 or 1-800-663-2600

Public Works (Provincial)
1-844-696-7737

Eastlink Outage
1-888-345-1111

Environmental Emergencies (oil spills and gas leaks)
1-800-565-1633

Drinking Water Safety
1-877-252-8476

Food Safety
1-877-252-3663

Emergency Management Office (NS)
1-866-424-5620

Maritime Northeast Pipeline Emergency
1-888-444-6677

Department of Environment
 Truro Office **902-893-5880**

Department of Natural Resources
 Bible Hill Office **902-893-5620**

EMO (NS) Region 2 EMPO		
Region 2 (Cumberland, Colchester, East Hants, Pictou, Antigonish, Guysborough)	Dominic Fewer	902-897-8152 dominic.fewer@novascotia.ca

Town of Truro Office
902-895-4484
 After Hours
902-895-5351

Town of Stewiacke Office
902-639-2231
 After Hours
902-897-7823

Municipality of Colchester
902-897-3150
 After Hours
902-897-3160

911 - This is for emergencies only. If someone’s health, safety, and/or property are threatened, and help is needed right away.

811 - For health information and advice when you have a health concern or question.

511 - For information about Provincial roads in Nova Scotia.

211 - For community and social services.