

# After Action Report Hurricane Fiona

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**EAST HANTS**  
**We live it!**

# Overview

Environment Canada began monitoring Hurricane Fiona in the week leading up to landfall. On the night before the storm, it was projected that it would make landfall in Nova Scotia as a Category 2 storm. However, by the time the storm made landfall in the early hours on Saturday September 24, 2022, it was considered a Post Tropical Storm. It made landfall along Guyborough/Cape Breton Island. By late Sunday, the storm had moved out of the province.

There was damage reported throughout the municipality due to downed power poles and trees, and high winds. There were a few TIR-owned roads that were closed due to fallen trees and power poles.

Burntcoat Head Park had some downed trees but the structures were not damaged. The property was closed to the public. Fundy Tidal Interpretive Centre was closed to the public due to power outages.

All critical municipal infrastructure was back online by 12:00pm Wednesday, September 28, 2022. The majority of the municipality had power restoration by late Thursday evening, September 29th. Power restoration took longer in the Maitland area, where residents were without power for over 14 days.

All fire hall comfort centres were contacted prior to the storm to confirm the process for activation. Five (5) comfort centres activated during the event, and the East Hants Aquatics Centre was open for showers, water fill-up and charging devices during regular business hours.

## Chronology of Events

### Thursday, September 22, 2022

- Social media posts regarding clearing culverts and being prepared for flooding.
- Waste Management Centre sent ReCollect messaging for closure of facility on Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup>.
- East Hants Aquatic Centre shared closure for Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup>.
- Sportsplex Dome to be deflated tomorrow as a preventative measure.
- Shared provincial weather briefings with fire departments and reminded fire hall comfort centres to contact Municipality if they activate.
- Confirmed contact number and civic addresses for available comfort centres.
- Social media posts regarding 72-hour preparedness and having a home kit ready.
- RCMP requested information regarding possible comfort centre locations; EMC indicated that information would be shared with them if/when a centre activated.
- Updates to Kim regarding public messaging.
- Erin Taylor, Communications Coordinator, activated the [Storm Centre](#) web page where the Municipality posted updates regarding the storm and relevant contact information for the public, including pushing the message of 72-hour preparedness.
- Public Works arranged for municipal generators to be filled by Bluewave, including water plant locations and the LEMC.

- Continued monitoring of the impending system in the evening hours using various websites.

### **Friday, September 23, 2022**

- As per Emergency Management Plan, we activated to Level 3 - monitoring the impending hurricane.
- Province activated to Level 2, Partial Activation as of 8:00am this morning.
- Contracts spreadsheet printed off and downloaded off the network in case document was needed for Logistics.
- Burntcoat Head Park & Fundy Tidal Interpretive Centre to close early due to high tides, wind and rain, and will remain closed tomorrow.
- Province sent spreadsheet for Fiona cost tracking for damages incurred.
- Contact List for key staff updated.
- Situation Report #1 received from the province

### **Saturday, September 24, 2022**

- Fiona made landfall as a post tropical storm in the early morning hours.
- Provincial Coordination Centre (PCC) at full activation (24-hour coverage) & provided ICS 230 (Daily Meeting Schedule) form to all agencies.
- RCMP indicated that Maitland Fire Hall was opening as a comfort centre for people to have a coffee and get warm.
- Tom Gignac had to manually re-start generator when he arrived at LEMC in order to ensure servers were online and email was functioning.
- Water & Wastewater teams out in the field assessing critical infrastructure. Running on generators at treatment plants and water towers. Trees down blocking access to Lantz lagoon and Shubenacadie WW treatment plant.
- Email sent to PCC regarding downed trees and power lines at Shubenacadie WWTP, and assistance from NSPI required, escalation requested.
- Email sent to PCC for information regarding power pole by 279 Park Road, Elmsdale with a heavy lean into the road right-of-way.
- Organics Transfer Station at EH Waste Management Centre suffered damage. Previous to the storm there was some panel damages (documented prior to the event), however post-storm, the condition is more significantly reduced.
- Maitland Fire Hall & Walton Fire Hall activated their comfort centres for residents, information shared with PCC.
- Enfield Legion opened regular business hours and can be used as a comfort centre for residents.
- Two road closures in East Hants:
  - Route 215 between Walton & Shubenacadie (around civic 7900) due to trees and power lines down
  - Cedar Rd between Route 236 at Maple Grove to Route 215 due to trees and power lines down
- Conference call held with PCC at 3:30pm; Kim & Kelly called in. Multiple critical infrastructure issues throughout the province and varying municipalities.
- Substantial tree damage reported at Burntcoat.

- Kim sent update to Councillors.
- Information being shared on website and social media, as needed.
- Power restored to LEMC by supper time.
- Kelly & Kim at the ECC as the internet and cellular service was spotty at home locations, moved to Level 2 activation - Partial activation. Jesse was also on-site earlier in the day.

## 9.0 Activation Levels

There are four Activation levels to identify the level of Emergency Management functioning and activity:

Levels	Activation Requirements
4 (Routine)	All business units are conducting routine and normal operations. No events or incidents require focused attention. No personnel required.
3 (Monitor)	An event or incident has become apparent and a heightened sense of awareness or planning is required. Key Personnel Only (i.e. weather events)
2 (Partial)	An event or incident has occurred and a partial activation of the ECC is required. Key Personnel and Personnel from Responding Agencies (i.e. emergency road closure, flooding event)
1 (Full)	An event or incident has occurred and a full activation of the ECC is required. All Personnel (i.e. major forest fire, evacuation)

- PCC conference call at 9:30pm.

### Sunday, September 25, 2022

- Provincial Coordination Centre (PCC) remained at full activation.
- Over 415,000 people without power at one point.
- Kelly & Jesse at the ECC due to spotty services; remaining at Level 2 activation.
- PCC conference at 10:30am told us a few things:
  - NSPI restoration priorities are:
    - Telecoms - many places with no communications or very little, specifically first responder and emergency services
    - Fuel facilities
    - Other critical infrastructure
  - A decision about schools for the upcoming week will be coming later today.
  - Province will be holding a press conference this afternoon; Premier is in Cape Breton surveying the damage.
  - Fire departments in some areas out clearing trees, where possible.

- Irving Oil indicated their facility in Dartmouth is back to full power so they are working to get fuel out.
- Several comfort centres open, & information shared with RCMP:
  - Maitland Fire Hall
  - Walton Shore Fire Hall
  - Noel Fire Hall
  - Rawdon Fire Hall
  - Uniacke Fire Hall
  - Enfield Legion (opened for regular business hours, and less as a comfort centre)
  - Enfield Fire Hall
  - Kennetcook Fire Hall
- All information shared to website and social media.
- Still require assistance from NSPI for access to Shubenacadie WWTP. It was noted on the PCC conference call earlier that a separate group was being created to review and triage all requests received so far.
- If there are still widespread outages by the end of the day, we may want to consider opening the EH Aquatics Facility for showers, charging devices and water fill-up.
- Kim sent email update to Council.
- WMC to open tomorrow for regular business. Curbside collection services to run as scheduled this week. Options for post-storm tree clean-up support is still under review.
  - Tipping fees for tree & yard debris can be waived for the first week; messaging to be posted.
- Power slowly being restored to areas in East Hants.
- PCC conference calls at 3:30pm & 9:30pm.

### **Monday, September 26, 2022**

- Provincial Coordination Centre (PCC) remained at full activation.
- LEMC has power and office is open for staff and public.
- COVID work order created for any costs associated with Hurricane Fiona.
- DFA opened for damage related to Hurricane Fiona. The program covers up to \$200,000 in uninsurable losses per household, small business and not-for-profit group. Staff shared this information on website and social media.
- Email sent to PCC regarding critical infrastructure without power restored:
  - 21 Paley Rd, Lantz - lift station
  - 35 Paley Rd, Lantz - lagoon
  - 201 Hwy 277, Lantz - lift station
  - 2402 Hwy 2, Milford - lift station across from former municipal building
  - 2682 Hwy 2, Shubenacadie - water plant
  - 2848 Highway 2, Shubenacadie - lift station
  - 5 Second St, Shubenacadie - water tower
  - 19 Burgess Rd, Shubenacadie - WW treatment plant (previously reported)
  - 44 Burgess Rd, Shubenacadie - lift station

- Pushed 44 Burgess & 2848 Hwy 2 lift stations for priority as staff indicated this will alleviate some issues until Shubie WWTP has full power. Also pushed priority for 201 Hwy 277 lift station.
- Lantz lagoon had power briefly but out again.
- Power has been restored to lift station at the end of Old Horne Settlement Road E.
- Walton Fire Hall, Rawdon Fire Hall, Noel Fire Hall & Uniacke Fire Hall activated as comfort centres.
- WMC operating on generator power
- PCC Conference call at 9:30pm confirmed that NSPI is working on critical infrastructure restoration, including many water and wastewater facilities. Staff confirmed three locations in Lantz had power restored.

### Tuesday, September 27, 2022

- Provincial Coordination Centre (PCC) remained at full activation.
- PCC Conference calls at 10:30am, 3:30pm and 9:30pm.
- Schools closed.
- Power back on at 2848 Hwy 2 lift station; still without power at Burgess Rd lift station and is causing issues in that area.
- Received list of critical infrastructure from the province to be verified for power restoration.
- NSPI crews dispatched to 44 Burgess Rd to work on power restoration for lift station. Trees and brush are in the process of being, or have been, cleaned up at the entrance to the WW plant. NSPI did some work there last night as well so hopefully power restoration to the plant isn't too far behind either.
- NSPI crews have also been dispatched for the lift station at 2402 Highway 2, Milford (across from the old municipal building).
- Dwayne just informed me that we still do not have power to the water facility at 2682 Hwy 2, Shubenacadie or the water tower at 5 Second St. Both are still on generator power. I have forwarded this to the PCC, and they have indicated that it is in the queue.
- Communications NS is pushing the Disaster Financial Assistance program, which we have shared on our website and social media.
- Province will be addressing school openings provincial office openings later today.
- The Province is sharing food safety messaging from NECC. NSECC shared a toll-free number for the Public Health Officer should anyone wish to speak with a person about spoiled food. 1-877-936-8476. There will be a food safety media briefing later.
- NSPI indicated that their focus was now shifted to the Cape Breton and North Eastern regions.
- Fuel shortage is still a big issue in some areas, doesn't seem to be an issue for East Hants presently.
- Rawdon RCMP detachment still has no power and members are working out of their vehicles.
- There are still over 3,000 customers without power in East Hants. ETR times range from today at 11pm to Thursday at 11pm.
- Maitland, Walton, & Uniacke Fire halls opened as comfort centres. EH Aquatic Centre still available for showers, etc.
- Burgess Rd lift station and WWTP plan have power restored.

### Wednesday, September 28, 2022

- Provincial Coordination Centre (PCC) remained at full activation.
- Email sent to PCC regarding critical infrastructure without power restored:
  - 2402 Hwy 2, Milford - lift station
  - 2682 Hwy 2, Shubenacadie - water plant
- Maitland Fire Hall only comfort centre activated today; EH Aquatic Centre remains available for showers, etc.
  - Total shower use from Monday to Wednesday - 23
    - Monday - 7
    - Tuesday - 12
    - Wednesday - 4
- PCC Conference calls at 10:30am, 3:30pm & 9:30pm.
- Still over 2,000 customers without power, with the largest area presently in Urbania/South Maitland/Maitland/Selma/Maple Grove/Noel Shore/Georgefield/Latties Brook, with the approximate restoration time of October 1st.
- According to the teleconference call this morning, the majority of what is now left for power restoration are more complex repairs, which is why the times changed yesterday for many customers. They still anticipate a large number of customers to have power restored by end of day tomorrow, but the remainders will fall into the weekend, or early next week.
- Power was restored to all water and wastewater facilities by the end of day.

### Thursday, September 29, 2022

- Provincial Coordination Centre (PCC) remained at full activation.
- As a request from Council, a request for assistance was pushed to the PCC to have the Highway 215 cleared and re-opened. There are downed trees and power lines in the area. Fire departments have cleared what they can to get a small vehicle through but they would not be able to provide mutual aid to Maitland without a significant detour. The PCC indicated that if there was an immediate mutual aid request to contact the PCC. Otherwise, NSPI and NSPW are working as quickly as they can and NSPI are anticipated to be in the area tomorrow hopefully.
- Maitland Fire Hall only comfort centre activated today; EH Aquatic Centre remains available for showers, etc. Maitland has indicated that they will remain open until all residents in the area have power.
- As mentioned yesterday, NSPI still anticipate a number of customers to have power restored by end of day tomorrow, but the remainders will fall into the weekend, or early next week.
- Various funding program have been released by the province. That information has been shared. Municipal staff have been assisting residents with funding applications at office, as needed.

### Friday, September 30, 2022 to November 14, 2022

- Staff shared information on behalf of the province to have trees and brush cut on your property, but they would not take the debris away. That would be the responsibility of the owner.
- Staff collected name, address, phone number and a brief description of the required assistance.

- This information was sent to the PCC daily for collection and action by other agencies. Fire chiefs, municipal staff and councillors were informed of the program in order to get the information out to the public.
- Still power outages in the Noel/Maitland area.
- A request to have a tree removed from a hydrant at 197 Highway 214, Elmsdale was escalated to the PCC. This is municipal infrastructure and requested priority removal at this location, as first responders would not be able to easily access this hydrant in the event of an emergency.
- Contacted by Jonathan DeCoste, Northern Zone Emergency Preparedness, NS Health regarding no land line at Willows Manor in Shubenacadie. Pushed to PCC, phone line restored.
- PCC deactivated on October 11, 2022 at 5pm.
- Posted thank you message on website.
- Community funding program released by province for facilities to purchase generators and wiring. Closes November 17, 2022.
- No action was taken on addressing tree clean-up in East Hants. Email sent to EMO NS regarding East Hants not being included in the State of Emergency and therefore not qualifying for provincial clean-up assistance.
- Paul Schnurr, Incident Management Team, provided a spreadsheet of properties in East Hants that were assigned to them.
- One building at WMC still doesn't have power; this was recently pushed to our EMPO, Dominic Fewer for action.

## Recommended Action Items

1. Bump up staff Visa limits, as needed, in preparation for weather events such as these in the future.
2. WMC had internet issues; need to have back-ups that can be implemented seamlessly.
3. Cell service and general communications was a challenge for many days during this storm & no back-up power. Province should consider other alternatives (i.e., battery storage?)
  - a. Additional power banks should be purchased and provided to required staff.
  - b. Possible training for staff on TMR2 radios; confirm with Public Field Safety & Communications (PFSC) if they can be used for this type of communication.
4. Role of Councillors during an emergency - councillors should be reminded of their role and how to proceed with the escalation of an issue in their area.
5. Email was not available right away because generator was not set to automatic transfer following pre-hurricane maintenance check. Confirm with provider that this is set to automatic after future maintenance checks.
6. It was unclear who was on-call for what services. This should part of the pre-storm preparations in the future (i.e., 10 things to do before the storm).
7. Scott Preston will be responsible for generator re-fueling in the future for EHAC & LEMC buildings.
8. Download contracts spreadsheet onto computer or print a copy so it's available should there be issues with internet or connectivity (add to future pre-storm preparation check list).
9. Follow-up with province about the tree cutting program and how it didn't work for East Hants.
10. Possible policy and training for chainsaw operations in the future for specific staff.
11. Dangerous trees - employee liability? Check MGA and contact solicitor.



12. HR for tourism staff after the fact. Trees - where do they go? Should we be cutting them?
13. Communications - create a cheat sheet for who does what in an event.
14. PIO training for Erin in the future; check other ICS training she may have to take prior to that.
15. Finance - lots of angry people looking for funding at the front desk, with little to no guidance from the province on the programs and how municipalities could help residents. Provide feedback to province.

Action Item	Responsibility	Complete
Create a check list for pre-storm preparations (i.e., visa limit increase, on-call list, contracts database download, insurance)	Kelly Ash, in conjunction with ECC staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alternative back-up for WMC internet	Tom Gignac/Andrea Trask/Adam Clarkson	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional power banks for ECC staff	Kelly Ash	<input type="checkbox"/>
TMR2 training, if can be used for internal comms	Kelly Ash	<input type="checkbox"/>
Role of Council in an emergency; possible refresher	Kim Ramsay/Dominic Fewer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confirm with new fuel provider that generator is set to automatic transfer after each maintenance check	Scott Preston	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policy & training for chainsaw operations by municipal staff	Tracy Dixon	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create a cheat sheet for who does what in an event	Kelly Ash, in conjunction with ECC staff	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dangerous trees - check MGA and contact solicitor for employee liability	Kelly Ash	<input type="checkbox"/>
PIO training for Erin	Kelly Ash	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide feedback to province regarding funding programs and directing residents to municipal offices with no guidance provided.	Kelly Ash	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide feedback to province regarding tree cutting program and lack of communication back to the municipality	Kelly Ash/Sheralee Mitchell MacEwan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Look into Starlink kits for back-up communications/resiliency tool	Kelly Ash	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify shelter locations in advance of an event for Red Cross	Kelly Ash	<input type="checkbox"/>
Update future 72-hour messaging to be resilient for longer periods and to not rely on government support, noting that life may not go back to "normal" after 72 hours (Be prepared to be stuck in your home for at least 72 hours without anything)	Juliann Cashen/Erin Taylor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Communications for safe generator usage in future messaging	Juliann Cashen/Erin Taylor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consider activating a municipal hotline in the future for residents to call in issues in their area.	Kelly Ash	<input type="checkbox"/>