

Amendments Clarify Code of Conduct for Elected Officials

7 October 2025 | 11:41 AM

Municipal Affairs

The Province is making changes to the code of conduct for elected officials to address feedback from municipalities about the complaints and investigation process.

“We worked closely with our municipal partners to develop a code of conduct to provide elected officials with guidance on procedural standards and the level of professionalism expected of them,” said John Lohr, Minister of Municipal Affairs. “Based on the feedback received from municipalities, we’re refining the language to enhance its clarity, reduce the administrative burden and protect against potential misuse.”

Amendments to the regulations clarify that:

- complaints may be made by a council member related to the conduct of another elected official in the same municipality
- council members may not submit a complaint on behalf of another person or entity
- multiple complaints may not be submitted by a council member on the same subject.

When multiple complaints have been received about the same subject, the investigator must consolidate the complaints into a single investigation, where appropriate.

The changes do not apply to complaints and investigations already in progress.

Now in effect, the changes will address the immediate needs of municipalities while discussions to strengthen and refine the administration of the code of conduct continue.

The Province has committed to conducting a full review of the framework in 2027.

Quotes:

“The code of conduct has been a welcome and important tool for municipalities. As with all new things, we’d expect to make some adjustments. The changes will provide clarity and help our partners manage some unexpected outcomes. We appreciate being able to work hand in hand with the Province to ensure the code of conduct continues to meet the needs of Nova Scotia’s municipalities.”

— Pam Mood, Mayor, Town of Yarmouth; President, Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities; and Chair, code of conduct working committee

Quick Facts:

- the code of conduct regulations were introduced on October 21, 2024
- the regulations provide guiding principles and conduct requirements for elected officials in municipalities and villages; they were developed based on recommendations of a working group established in 2022
- the working group included representatives from the Department of Municipal Affairs, the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities, the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia and the Association of Nova Scotia Villages

Additional Resources:

Amendments to the code of conduct are available by selecting “Municipal Government Act” or “Halifax Regional Municipal Charter”
at: <https://novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regsbyact.htm>

News release – Province Introduces Code of Conduct for Municipal Officials: <https://news.novascotia.ca/en/2024/10/21/province-introduces-code-conduct-municipal-officials>

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