



BILL NO. 186

Government Bill

*1st Session, 65th General Assembly
Nova Scotia
4 Charles III, 2026*

An Act to Provide Support for Fire Protection Services

CHAPTER 6
ACTS OF 2026

**AS ASSENTED TO BY THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
APRIL 9, 2026**

The Honourable Kim Masland
Minister of Emergency Management

*Halifax, Nova Scotia
Printed by Authority of the Speaker of the House of Assembly*

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An Act to Provide Support for Fire Protection Services

Be it enacted by the Governor and Assembly as follows:

1 This Act may be cited as the *Support for Fire Protection Services Act*.

2 In this Act,

“accredited fire protection service training program” means a training program for a regulated fire protection service that is accredited by

(a) the Fire Commissioner; or

(b) a prescribed accreditation body and such accreditation is recognized by the Fire Commissioner;

“deputy fire commissioner” means a person designated as a deputy fire commissioner under subsection 5(2);

“fire” includes an explosion;

“fire chief” means the senior official within, and in charge of, a fire department;

“Fire Code” means the Fire Code as defined in the *Fire Safety Act*;

“Fire Commissioner” means the person designated as the Fire Commissioner under subsection 5(2);

“fire department” means an organization that provides fire protection services and

(a) is operated by a municipality;

(b) is registered by a municipality pursuant to Section 294 of the *Municipal Government Act*; or

(c) is designated as a fire department by the *Fire Safety Act* or the regulations under that Act;

“fire protection service” includes

(a) fire suppression, fire prevention, fire inspections, fire investigations and fire safety;

(b) the prevention of unsafe levels of carbon monoxide or other hazardous materials, as defined in the Fire Code;

(c) the mitigation of the effects of fire;

(d) recovery from fire;

(e) response to an emergency situation;

(f) support or provision of medical fire response services;

(g) fire protection service dispatch and communication;

(h) public fire protection service training and awareness;

(i) professional training, education, accreditation and certification with respect to clauses (a) to (h); and

(j) any other service prescribed by the regulations;

“fire protection service level” means a level for operational capabilities, resources, training requirements or service expectations for a municipality’s fire protection services that is based on an assessment of community risk and local hazards;

“fire protection service plan” means a plan or program prepared by a municipality applying risk assessment considerations to reflect and implement the regulated fire protection service requirements, including training, for its fire protection service level;

“fire protection service provider” means an organization, such as a fire department, fire commission, fire brigade or fire association, that is authorized and available to provide regulated fire protection services within a municipality;

“fire protection service review” means an operational exercise by a fire protection service provider to collect information on community needs, existing capacity, training requirements and resource identification;

“fire safety” has the same meaning as in the *Fire Safety Act*;

“fire suppression” means an organized emergency response for controlling and extinguishing fires;

“firefighter” means a person employed in, or appointed to, a fire department and assigned to undertake regulated fire protection services, and includes paid, paid-on-call and volunteer personnel and a fire chief;

“Minister” means the Minister of Emergency Management;

“municipality” means a municipality as defined in the *Municipal Government Act* and includes a village;

“provincial inspector” means a person designated as a provincial inspector under Section 6;

“regulated fire protection service” means a fire protection service that must be conducted in accordance with a standard or the regulations;

“standard” means a regulated fire protection service standard prescribed or adopted by the regulations.

3 (1) The Minister, or such other member of Executive Council assigned by the Governor in Council, is responsible for the supervision and management of this Act.

(2) The Minister shall

(a) provide oversight of the administration and delivery of fire protection services;

(b) provide oversight of a municipally led fire protection service model, if one is in place, for fire protection service providers;

(c) support the delivery of firefighter training and certification;

(d) encourage regional co-operation, coordination and resource-sharing in fire protection service delivery, both within and outside the Province; and

(e) support the establishment and operation of the Office of the Fire Commissioner.

4 (1) The Minister may delegate any power or responsibility of the Minister under this Act to a person or a class of persons.

(2) A delegation under subsection (1) must be in writing and may include any terms or conditions that the Minister considers advisable.

5 (1) The Minister may appoint, in accordance with the *Civil Service Act*, such persons as are necessary for the administration and enforcement of this Act, the regulations and the standards.

(2) The Minister shall designate, from among those persons appointed under subsection (1), a Fire Commissioner and one or more deputy fire commissioners to perform the duties and functions, and exercise the powers and authorities, imposed or conferred upon them by this Act, the regulations and the standards.

(3) The Fire Commissioner may delegate any or all of the duties and functions of the Fire Commissioner to a deputy fire commissioner, including any quasi-judicial functions of the Fire Commissioner.

(4) The Minister may designate one or more deputy fire commissioners to act in the place of the Fire Commissioner in the Fire Commissioner's absence or incapacity or where the office of the Fire Commissioner is vacant.

(5) A deputy fire commissioner designated under subsection (4) shall perform the functions and duties, and has the powers and authorities, of the Fire Commissioner, subject to any limitations determined by the Minister.

6 The Fire Commissioner may designate, from among those persons appointed under subsection 5(1), qualified persons as provincial inspectors who may perform the duties and functions, and exercise the powers and authorities, imposed or conferred upon deputy fire commissioners by this Act, the regulations and the standards, subject to any limitations determined by the Fire Commissioner.

7 (1) The Fire Commissioner shall supervise and be responsible for all matters relating to the work, conduct and administration of the Office of the Fire Commissioner.

(2) The Fire Commissioner shall exercise such other powers and perform such duties as are assigned to the Fire Commissioner

(a) under this Act, the regulations or the standards; or

(b) by the Minister.

(3) The Fire Commissioner shall, in accordance with the regulations, submit to the Minister in each year a detailed report on the activities of the Office of the Fire Commissioner.

8 The Fire Commissioner is responsible for the supervision of the Fire Marshal designated under the *Fire Safety Act* and the Office of the Fire Marshal.

9 The Fire Commissioner may

- (a) promote, encourage and co-operate with any body or person interested in developing and promoting the principles and practices of fire protection services;
- (b) advise persons or organizations interested in developing or promoting the principles and practices of fire protection services, emergency services and related communication systems, and the delivery of those services and systems;
- (c) require such reports as the Fire Commissioner considers necessary from
 - (i) a municipality or a group of municipalities, or
 - (ii) a person authorized or required under this Act or the regulations to inspect, investigate or examine fire protection services;
- (d) make recommendations to the Minister respecting proposed standards or regulations or any other fire protection service matter;
- (e) develop guidelines respecting fire protection services for fire protection service providers or the public;
- (f) promote regional, provincial and interprovincial collaboration;
- (g) oversee, develop, approve or deliver regulated fire protection service training courses or programs; and
- (h) establish or recognize regions of the Province or groups of municipalities for the joint delivery of regulated fire protection services.

10 (1) No person shall operate or allow the operation of a regulated fire protection service training program unless the program is an accredited fire protection service training program.

(2) A person may apply to the Fire Commissioner in accordance with the regulations for

- (a) accreditation of a regulated fire protection service training program; or
- (b) recognition of an accreditation of a fire protection service training program by a prescribed accreditation body.

(3) Upon receiving an application under subsection (2), the Fire Commissioner shall determine if the program meets the criteria prescribed by the regulations and may issue an accreditation, or recognition of an accreditation, to the regulated fire protection service training program.

(4) An accreditation, or a recognition of an accreditation, issued under this Section is valid for the period prescribed by the regulations and may be renewed in accordance with the regulations.

(5) An accreditation, or a recognition of an accreditation, issued under this Section is subject to the terms and conditions prescribed by the regulations.

(6) The Fire Commissioner may refuse to issue, recognize or renew an accreditation, or may revoke or suspend an accreditation, or the recognition of an accreditation, if the Fire Commissioner has reason to believe that the accredited fire protection service training program no longer meets the criteria prescribed by the regulations or has failed to comply with this Act, the regulations or a standard, or for other just cause.

(7) Where the Fire Commissioner issues a refusal, suspension or revocation under subsection (6), the Fire Commissioner shall provide written reasons for such refusal, suspension or revocation to the applicant or person operating the accredited fire protection service training program.

11 A municipality and a fire protection service provider shall, at the times and in the manner required by the regulations, conduct a fire protection service review to determine its fire protection service level.

12 The Minister may, on behalf of the Province,

(a) enter into agreements with the Government of Canada, the government of a province of Canada or a municipality respecting fire protection services and the development of fire protection service plans;

(b) authorize the Fire Commissioner, through the Office of the Fire Commissioner, to operate co-operatively with another body to share services or resources with the Government of Canada, the government of a province of Canada or a municipality, or to enter into agreements to provide services or resources for a fee;

(c) enter into agreements with the Government of Canada and the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia for the administration and payment of compensation benefits to persons engaged in fire protection services; and

(d) acquire, by purchase or lease, real and personal property within or outside of the Province for a purpose related to fire protection services.

13 A person who fails to comply with this Act or the regulations is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction

(a) in the case of an individual, to a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or to imprisonment of not more than six months, or both; or

(b) in the case of a corporation, to a fine not exceeding \$100,000.

14 Where there is a conflict between this Act and the *Fire Safety Act*, this Act prevails.

- 15 (1)** The Minister may make regulations
- (a) prescribing services as fire protection services;
 - (b) prescribing regulated fire protection services;
 - (c) prescribing, adopting or modifying a standard;
 - (d) respecting the powers, functions and duties of the Fire Commissioner, deputy fire commissioners and provincial inspectors;
 - (e) respecting the accreditation of regulated fire protection service training programs, including the application process, renewal and terms and conditions for such accreditation;
 - (f) respecting the recognition of an accreditation of a fire protection service training program by an accreditation body;
 - (g) respecting the Fire Commissioner's approval of regulated fire protection service training courses;
 - (h) establishing an advisory board and its membership;
 - (i) respecting a fire protection service review;
 - (j) prescribing anything that, by this Act, is to be prescribed or is to be determined or regulated by the regulations;
 - (k) defining any word or expression used but not defined in this Act;
 - (l) further defining any word or expression defined in this Act;
 - (m) respecting any matter or thing the Minister considers necessary or advisable to carry out effectively the intent and purpose of this Act.

(2) The exercise by the Minister of the authority contained in subsection (1) is a regulation within the meaning of the *Regulations Act*.

16 Clause 3(y) of Chapter 6 of the Acts of 2002, the *Fire Safety Act*, as amended by Chapter 34 of the Acts of 2014, is further amended by striking out "Municipal Affairs" and substituting "Emergency Management".

17 (1) Subsection 9(4) of Chapter 6 is amended by striking out "Municipal Affairs" and substituting "Emergency Management".

(2) Subsection 9(5) of Chapter 6 is amended by striking out "Municipal Affairs" and substituting "Emergency Management".

18 Chapter 39 of the Acts of 2008, the *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*, is amended by adding immediately after the Heading "FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES" the following Section:

303A The Minister of Emergency Management is responsible for the supervision and management of this Part.

19 Chapter 18 of the Acts of 1998, the *Municipal Government Act*, is amended by adding immediately after the Heading “FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES” the following Section:

292A The Minister of Emergency Management is responsible for the supervision and management of this Part.

20 Section 30B of Chapter 376 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the *Public Service Act*, as enacted by Chapter 9 of the Acts of 2011 and amended by Chapter 29 of the Acts of 2021, is further amended by adding immediately after clause (e) the following clause:

(ea) the voluntary sector, including all affairs and matters pertaining to volunteerism and the non-profit sector, except for legislation specific to volunteer fire and ground search and rescue services;

21 Section 36B of Chapter 376, as enacted by Chapter 6 of the Acts of 2024, is amended by adding immediately after clause (e) the following clauses:

- (ea) fire protection services, training and certification;
- (eb) the Office of the Fire Commissioner;
- (ec) the Office of the Fire Marshal;
- (ed) legislation specific to volunteer and ground search and rescue services;

22 Clause 46I(d) of Chapter 376 is repealed.

23 Clause 2(f) of Chapter 406 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the *Rural and Fire District Act*, is amended by striking out “Municipal Affairs” and substituting “Emergency Management”.

24 Chapter 13 of the Acts of 2002, the *Volunteer Fire and Ground Search and Rescue Services Act*, is amended by adding immediately after Section 3 the following Section:

3A The Minister of Emergency Management is responsible for the supervision and management of this Act.

25 Section 10 comes into force on such day as the Governor in Council orders and declares by proclamation.
