



Fire Service Modernization: What It Means for the Town of Lockeport

Information brief | October 2026

Nova Scotia is modernizing fire services to strengthen firefighter safety, consistent training, service planning, public accountability and long-term sustainability. The Support for Fire Protection Services Act creates a new provincial oversight framework while recognizing that fire protection can continue to be delivered through different local and regional arrangements.

What is changing?

Provincial modernization includes fire protection service reviews informed by community risks; alignment of firefighter competency, training and protective equipment with the identified service level; improved records and reporting; and the development of provincial standards and supports. The requirements will be implemented progressively as regulations and tools are developed.

What does this mean for Lockeport?

The Town of Lockeport has an important role in reviewing the fire protection provided to its residents and identifying an appropriate, sustainable level of service. This includes considering local risks, firefighter and apparatus capabilities, mutual aid, future capital needs and the costs of delivering fire protection. Modernization does not itself require the Town to dissolve its fire department or transfer it to another municipality.

How does the Municipality of Shelburne fit in?

The Municipality of the District of Shelburne is reviewing its broader fire service structure, including municipal oversight, service agreements, operational expectations, training, risk assessments and financial accountability. Because Shelburne purchases fire protection services under an agreement involving Lockeport, both municipalities have an interest in ensuring that the arrangement is clear, measurable and sustainable. Any proposed changes should be discussed collaboratively and reviewed against the signed agreement before decisions are made.

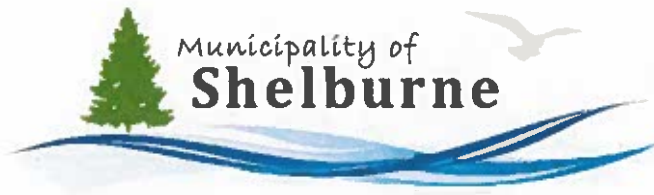
What should a future service agreement address?

- Clearly defined response areas, services and service levels based on documented risks.
- Participation in service reviews, operational discussions, training and readiness reporting.
- Financial transparency, annual reporting and fair, predictable funding arrangements.
- Responsibilities for apparatus, equipment, capital planning, insurance and agreement review.

The key message

Modernization is an opportunity for Lockeport and Shelburne to work together to protect residents, support volunteer firefighters and clarify shared expectations. The goal is continuity of reliable fire protection with stronger planning and accountability, not an automatic or predetermined change in who provides the service.

Official provincial references: [Provincial modernization overview](#) | [Provincial modernization presentation](#)



PROTECTIVE SERVICES | COUNCIL INFORMATION PACKAGE

Fire Service Modernization

Provincial legislation, governance reform, risk-based service planning and local implications

Information package • 20 October 2026

Purpose

To provide Council with a consolidated, navigable collection of Nova Scotia fire service modernization resources and a practical framework for considering municipal oversight, service agreements, fiscal accountability and community risk.

Contents

1. Executive summary and legislative status
2. What Council needs to understand
3. Municipal considerations
4. Proposed municipal work program
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7. Local documents to attach

1. Executive summary and legislative status

Nova Scotia is modernizing its fire service system in response to governance, safety, training and consistency concerns identified in sector reviews and a provincial audit. The Support for Fire Protection Services Act (Bill 186) received Royal Assent on April 9, 2026 and came into force immediately, according to the Province's fact sheet.

The new provincial framework contemplates standards for training, certification, equipment, planning and reporting. Detailed requirements are to be phased in through provincial implementation and future standards or regulations. Council should distinguish the enacted framework from requirements not yet prescribed.

The Province states that section 293 of the Municipal Government Act is unchanged: municipalities may provide fire and emergency services but are not universally required to do so. Existing volunteer societies, brigades and commissions are not automatically reorganized. The provincial fact sheet also identifies service reviews and community risk assessments for municipalities and service providers.

2. What Council needs to understand

Issue	Council consideration
Legislation versus implementation	Bill 186 is in force. Some standards, tools and regulations are still being developed and should not be described as current mandatory details.
Independent departments	The provincial framework does not, on its own, convert independently organized volunteer departments into municipal departments.
Risk-based planning	Community hazards, population, response geography, staffing and realistic capacity should inform locally chosen service levels.
Municipal agreements	Contracts can be reviewed for defined services, reporting, meetings, training evidence, financial records and capital obligations, subject to existing contractual and legal requirements.
Financial stewardship	Consider long-term apparatus replacement, facilities, equipment, operating support and equitable, transparent accountability.

3. Municipal considerations

The municipality purchases or supports fire protection through multiple arrangements, including service relationships with the Town of Shelburne and Town of Lockeport and independent volunteer departments. Modernization provides a timely reason to assess whether those arrangements adequately support the municipality's risk profile, governance expectations and available finances.

- Conduct a documented fire service and community risk review across the full municipal service area, coordinating with relevant fire service providers and neighbouring municipal partners.
- Review current service contracts before giving notice or altering financial commitments. Identify term, renewal, termination, transition and continuity-of-service provisions.

- Define reasonable reporting expectations: annual financial statements, budget requests, training and competency records, equipment readiness, significant incident reporting and participation in scheduled coordination meetings.
- Prepare a sustainable apparatus and infrastructure funding approach that clarifies who owns, funds, maintains and replaces capital assets.
- Engage chiefs, volunteer organizations, local towns and regional partners early so that proposed municipal oversight improves safety and consistency without undermining volunteer capacity.

4. Proposed municipal work program

Issue	Council consideration
Phase 1 Baseline	Inventory agreements, department structures, assets, operating budgets, response areas, available training records and current service levels.
Phase 2 Risk and service review	Use the provincial risk-assessment tool when available; document hazards, coverage limitations and feasible service-level options.
Phase 3 Governance and contracts	Develop a consistent municipal oversight framework and compare possible agreements, including contracted, collaborative and municipally led options.
Phase 4 Financial and operational planning	Model operating costs, capital replacement and transition obligations; assess implementation capacity and impacts on service coverage.
Phase 5 Council direction	Return with a recommended model, legal review, engagement record, implementation plan and specific Council motions.

5. Decision and document checklist

- Confirm whether Council wishes to initiate a formal municipal (Town) fire service review.
- Authorize collection and analysis of existing service agreements and departmental information through appropriate processes.
- Establish a timetable and engagement plan, with volunteer departments, towns and neighbouring partners.
- Require legal review before cancellation, amendment or replacement of any fire protection agreement.
- Separate the information-reporting stage from subsequent decisions on governance structure or financial commitments.

6. Annotated source index

Some source links may be updated by government or organizations.

A. Primary legislation and modernization

1. Support for Fire Protection Services Act (Bill 186) [Open document ↗](#)

Official legislature bills index; locate Bill 186 and its enacted text. Primary authority; consult the latest consolidated statute for legal application.

2. Provincial Act Fact Sheet [Open document ↗](#)

Concise provincial explanation of section 293, reviews, governance, training and implementation dates.

3. Strengthening and Modernizing Fire Services presentation [Open document ↗](#)

Provincial explanation of modernization goals and proposed service delivery and oversight direction.

4. Provincial Fire Modernization Hub [Open document ↗](#)

Central source for evolving bulletins, implementation and training resources.

5. February 23, 2026 provincial announcement [Open document ↗](#)

Public policy rationale and summary of Bill 186.

B. FSANS governance review and municipal response

6. FSANS Final Fire and Associated Services Governance Study (2025) [Open document ↗](#)

Foundational governance review; includes recommendations on funding, operational structure, training and accountability.

7. FSANS Phase 2 implementation roadmap [Open document ↗](#)

Official page listing roadmap and related modernization documents.

8. Fire Services Modernization Q&A (February 2026) [Open document ↗](#)

Questions and answers for fire service leadership and municipalities.

9. FSANS modernization conference presentation (April 10, 2026) [Open document ↗](#)

Sector-facing modernization presentation.

10. FSANS Governance Review project portal [Open document ↗](#)

Background, consultation process and study materials.

11. NSFM fire service review and NSFM/AMANS municipal response [Open document ↗](#)

Municipal-sector interpretation, concerns and analysis of governance recommendations.

C. Existing legal framework

12. Municipal Government Act [Open document ↗](#)

Especially Part X, sections 293–302, and other provisions relevant to municipal governance and intermunicipal arrangements.

13. Emergency Management legislative resources and Fire Safety Act [Open document ↗](#)

Official gateway for relevant emergency-management and fire-safety statutes.

14. Fire Safety Regulations [Open document ↗](#)

Supporting provincial fire-safety regulatory framework.

15. Occupational Health and Safety publications and legislation [Open document ↗](#)

OHS framework relevant to departments, workplaces and safety management.

16. Workplace Health and Safety Regulations [Open document ↗](#)

Requirements applicable to workplace hazards and activities where relevant.

D. Training and safety reform

17. Nova Scotia Firefighters School value-for-money audit [Open document ↗](#)

Provincial findings on safety, training, accountability and governance.

18. Province ends relationship with Firefighters School [Open document ↗](#)

Official response following audit findings.

19. Firefighter training plan update [Open document ↗](#)

Fire Training Advisory Committee and interim program.

20. Provincial equipment and training investment [Open document ↗](#)

Support for regional training capacity.

21. Fire Service Leadership Certificate announcement [Open document ↗](#)

Provincial support for leadership development.

E. Emergency management and legislative context

22. Strategic Emergency Management Plan [Open document ↗](#)

Broader provincial emergency coordination context.

23. Department of Emergency Management reports [Open document ↗](#)

Reports and accountability information.

24. FSANS document library [Open document ↗](#)

Sector research, documents and position papers.

25. Nova Scotia Hansard, February 24, 2026 [Open document ↗](#)

Legislative debate explaining policy intent; debate does not replace the enacted statute.

Provincial bulletins (implementation updates)

September, August and July 2026 bulletins [Open document ↗](#)

Accessible from the provincial modernization hub; check again before the Council meeting for newly published bulletins.

7. Local (Town of Lockeport) documents to review

The following records accompany the package. They are not contained in this external-source index:

- Town of Lockeport fire protection agreement and schedules.
- Current registered fire department list, response boundaries and other aid agreements.
- Municipal fire service financial contributions and apparatus/facility obligations.
- Department training, competency and inspection records that may legally be shared.
- Any existing local fire risk assessments, Fire Underwriters Survey reports or strategic planning material.
- Draft standard reporting expectations, proposed work plan and consultation schedule.