

Provincial Fire Safety Management

Office of the Fire Marshal

Key Messages

- Office of the Fire Marshal is failing to effectively manage fire and building safety, despite similar 2011 audit report
- Forty per cent of fire inspections tested, relating to vulnerable people, completed past mandated due date
- Office of the Fire Marshal not meeting legislated requirement to ensure municipal inspections are completed
- Office of the Fire Marshal not following inspection policy
- Office has incomplete listing of buildings requiring inspections
- Risks remain in building plan review process for new construction and renovation projects
- Conflict of interest issue identified with Fire Marshal

Why We Did This Audit

- Fire safety and prevention is important for the health and safety of all Nova Scotians
- Our 2011 audit found the Office of the Fire Marshal was not doing an adequate job protecting the public from fire safety risks in buildings, and management was not providing appropriate oversight of operations
- The Office of the Fire Marshal is responsible for fire inspections of provincially owned and licensed facilities, building plan reviews, and investigations with fatalities

Management is Failing to Adequately Protect the Public from Fire Safety Risks

- Forty per cent of inspections tested, relating to vulnerable people, completed past mandated due date
- No employee performance standards or annual performance reviews
- No management reviews of inspections, follow-up inspections, or complaints
- No quality assurance program to ensure staff are consistently and appropriately completing inspections
- Inconsistent fire safety complaint and resolution process
- Office of the Fire Marshal not completing core management functions of planning, organizing, leading and controlling
- Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing failing to complete statutory obligation to oversee and monitor compliance to the *Fire Safety Act*

The Office of the Fire Marshal is Failing to meet Legislated Requirement to Ensure Municipal Inspections are Completed, Not Following Inspection Policy

- The Office of the Fire Marshal does not complete audits, conduct oversight, or monitor municipal inspections
- The Memorandum of Understanding between the Office of the Fire Marshal and Halifax Regional Fire and Emergency Services is out of date and needs to be reviewed
- Deputy Fire Marshals and Municipal Inspectors appear to understand legislated roles
- 100% of inspection files tested did not have appropriate supporting evidence
- Inspection policy not reviewed or updated since 2016
- Two private schools not inspected by Office of the Fire Marshal as required by Legislation and Regulations
- Multiple public housing buildings missing from the Office of the Fire Marshal's listing

Fire Investigation Missing from Information System, Investigations Completed Late

- Important investigation detail missing from the Information System
- Fire investigation reports completed past required filing date

Risks in the Building Plan Review Process

- Office of the Fire Marshal is not following up regularly with owners when building plan information is incomplete
- Office of the Fire Marshal is not following up to ensure issues identified during the building plan review are addressed
- Completed building plan reviews conducted in the required timeframe
- No building plan review policy in place
- Inspections not completed during construction or prior to occupancy

Conflict of Interest with Fire Marshal and Fire Inspectors Association of Nova Scotia

- Fire Marshal sits on board of Fire Inspectors Association of Nova Scotia while partner is Executive Director of the organization
- This conflict of interest was not disclosed as required by the *Provincial Conflict of Interest Policy*