

NOTICE TO RESIDENTS Port Hawkesbury, NS – September 16, 2026

Town Continues Response Following September 4–5 Rainfall Event

The Town of Port Hawkesbury continues to respond to the impacts of the severe rainfall event of September 4–5, which resulted in basement flooding, sewer backups, surface flooding, and property damage in parts of the community.

“We recognize how difficult this event has been for residents who experienced water in their homes, particularly those who have dealt with similar issues during previous severe rainfall events,” said Mayor Brenda Chisholm-Beaton. “The Town is taking these concerns seriously and is working to better understand what occurred and what practical improvements may be available.”

Engineering Review Underway

The Town has retained STRUM Consulting to complete a focused engineering assessment of municipal stormwater infrastructure, with particular attention to the Tamarac area. STRUM’s assessment of municipal system capacity is ongoing. An initial field review was completed on September 11, with additional field work planned in the coming days. Engineers are also reviewing existing infrastructure drawings, gathering topographic and LiDAR information, and reviewing rainfall information from the recent event and historical events.

As of September 15th, 53 residents from throughout Port Hawkesbury have provided information about their experience during the September 4–5 event and, in some cases, previous basement flooding during severe rainfall. Reports have been received through the Public Works 24-hour emergency line, the REMO contact centre, the Town’s dedicated email address and direct contact with Town staff. This information is being mapped and reviewed as part of the municipal infrastructure assessment.

These reports describe what residents observed and do not, on their own, determine the cause of flooding. Water can enter individual properties in several different ways, and this information will assist the engineers in identifying affected areas, recurring concerns and patterns while assessing the performance and capacity of municipal infrastructure.

Residents who experienced basement flooding, sewer backups or other significant water-related impacts and have not yet contacted the Town are encouraged to email emo@townofporthawkesbury.ca or call **902-625-7893**. The findings from the STRUM review will be brought forward to Council and discussed publicly when completed. The Town is hopeful that an initial report will be available in October.

Broader Infrastructure Planning

The Town was also already undertaking broader infrastructure planning prior to this event. Earlier in 2026, the Town and the Municipality of the County of Inverness engaged CBCL to complete a Municipal Services Study examining the condition and capacity of municipal water and wastewater infrastructure. The broader study includes wet-weather monitoring, assessment of inflow and infiltration into the wastewater collection system, hydraulic modelling, identification of capacity constraints and recommendations for future infrastructure improvements. The project is being completed in partnership with Inverness County with support through the Nova Scotia Municipal Innovation Program.

“These events reinforce the importance of understanding how our infrastructure performs during increasingly severe weather and making informed decisions about where improvements are needed,” said Mayor Chisholm-Beaton. *“We want those decisions to be based on good engineering information, and the experiences residents have shared with us.”*

Regional Response

The Town is a member of the newly formed Western Cape Breton Regional Emergency Management Organization (REMO), together with Inverness, Victoria and Richmond Counties. During the event, the Town provided the Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre as the location for the Regional Emergency Coordination Centre and provided staff, resources and logistical support to the regional response. Town officials have also been in contact with the Province regarding possible regional measures related to Disaster Financial Assistance programming. Further information will be shared as it becomes available.

“Our focus is on supporting residents, completing the engineering work and making informed decisions based on the information we are gathering,” said Mayor Chisholm-Beaton. *“We will continue to keep residents and Council updated as this work progresses.”*

Media Contact:

Terry Doyle, P.Eng.
Chief Administrative Officer
Town of Port Hawkesbury