



Provincial legislation mandates that each Municipality in the Province of Nova Scotia, develop plans to deal with Emergency situations within their respective jurisdictions.

In the Halifax Regional Municipality, (HRM), that responsibility rests with the Halifax Emergency Management Organization which has appointed an Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) to fulfill that mandate.

The Emergency Management office is located in the Eric Spicer building on Mount Hope Avenue in Woodside. The current Coordinator is Barry Manuel.

The Eric Spicer building is the location where elected officials and Department heads manage the response to serious incidents, including emergencies and disasters. The Spicer building houses what is known as the Municipal Coordination Centre (MCC).






Since much of the emergency planning initiatives are carried out by a single person with an Administrative Assistant, The EMC depends on volunteers to assist with many tasks. These volunteers are organized into groupings such as the Halifax Auxiliary Telecommunications Service (HATS) to provide backup telecommunications services.

There are several other such groups of Volunteers.

One such group of volunteers is collectively known as Joint Emergency Management (JEM) teams, of which there are currently FIVE and a SIXTH is being planned.

As the name JOINT implies, these are volunteers who assist the EMC to perform specific tasks within their respective communities, under the guidance and direction of the EMC.

JEMs are currently located in FIVE areas of HRM:

-  Sheet Harbour JEM, Sheet Harbour, NS.
-  Eastern Shore JEM, Chezzetcook, NS
-  Musquodoboit Valley JEM, Middle
Musquodoboit, NS
-  River Lake JEM, Fall River, NS
-  Western Region JEM, Hatchet Lake, NS

At the local level, the JEM is managed by a volunteer executive board consisting of a Chair, Vice-Chair and a Secretary

While each JEM operates independently, there are a number of core functions JEMs perform under the direction of a volunteer JEM Council which coordinates these activities.

What tasks do JEMs perform?

CORE Functions of the JEM:

- Public Education,
- Comfort Centre Management,
- Community Status Reporter Management,
- Telecommunications.

Each of these functions, are critical components in the successful operation of all the JEMs.

The Public Education Function involves, as the name implies, an education program to inform members of the public, of the need to prepare for the possibility of an emergency/disaster that could have the potential to negatively impact their families and property.

The Public Educators provide advice on the need for emergency kits and what these kits should contain.

They stress the need for those affected to be prepared to fend for themselves, for a period of 72 hours. It may take that long or longer before emergency responders can get to them to provide help.

Among other things, persons performing educational functions should be recruiting volunteers who may wish to volunteer to help out with JEM activities.

Comfort Centre Management.

The primary function of Comfort Centres is to provide comfort for persons suffering short term discomfort resulting from the stresses imposed by abnormal situations.

In many emergency/disaster incidents, people may need to use the services of a Comfort Centre to get out of the elements, get warm, have a place to have a cold drink or coffee/tea.

These Comfort Centres are usually for short duration stays until conditions improve and roads are made passable.

For longer duration stays, Comfort Centres may be converted into shelters. These are run by the Red Cross who have trained volunteers to take care of sleeping arrangements and meals under contract with the Provincial Department of Community and Services.

In these situations, those trained in Comfort Centre Management MAY be able to assist the Red Cross in its responsibility.

From time to time, courses in food handling and general Comfort Centre Management functions are given across HRM.

Community Status Reporters are volunteers within the JEM structure, who report conditions in their respective communities that are generally storm related and potentially impact normal living conditions.

EXAMPLE: Roads impassable because of debris, or bridges washed out or unsafe to use. Roads closed by debris from storm surges along coastal areas, flooding etc.

Although an integral part of the JEM, Community Status Reporters – once trained – are not usually expected to attend JEM meetings, but are welcome to attend meetings if they wish.

The value of these volunteers is the knowledge of their community and the ability to assess and report on abnormalities that they observe, and the possibility of negative consequences of NOT making hazards known to Emergency Management officials.

Telecommunications is a vital part of any response to emergency/disaster situations. If there is no way to communicate with emergency managers, help is not likely to arrive in a timely fashion or at all.

Each JEM is equipped with current technology equipment that is backed-up by redundant communications equipment. This equipment is intended to augment or temporarily replace systems which have failed due to system stress or overload.

Although backup telecommunications is the responsibility of the **Halifax Auxiliary Telecommunications Service (HATS)** operating out of EMO headquarters, members of the JEM are trained to use certain telecom. equipment to augment HATS operators or to staff telecom. positions at the JEM sites when conditions prevent trained HATS members from being able to go to those JEM sites. (i.e, severe weather, impassable roads etc.)

While our geographic location often saves us from the ravages of such events as hurricanes, such things as the recent flooding in places like Sydney, NS, are a constant reminder of our need for vigilance and preparedness.

Belonging to a JEM provides a mechanism for this preparedness and is an excellent way for ordinary citizens to contribute to the well-being of their neighbours and friends.



Thank you for taking time to participate in this presentation.

Are there any questions?

You are welcome to join with us in making our communities a safer and more secure place to live.