



## Objective 1

To determine whether the Department of Justice and Public Safety effectively managed Municipal Emergency Management Plans and the Provincial Emergency Management Plan.

## Objective 2

To determine whether the Department of Justice and Public Safety effectively managed a comprehensive Government Business Continuity Plan.



## Audit Scope Period

April 1, 2022 to  
September 30, 2025



## Why this Audit is Important

The Emergency Services Act assigns clear responsibilities to the Minister and the Director of Emergency Services to ensure the province and its municipalities are prepared to respond to and recover from emergencies, and to ensure the continuity of essential government services. Given the importance of coordinated planning to protect communities and ensure continuity of essential government services, it is critical that the Department has effective systems, monitoring, and guidance in place. This audit is important to determine whether these responsibilities are being met and whether emergency management and business continuity planning across government are positioned to effectively support the province during emergencies.



## What We Found

Emergency Management Plans	
No current documented policies or procedures for provincial or municipal plans	Only 9% of municipalities had a valid plan
Approved municipal plans did not always comply with guidance	Municipal plan testing not regularly encouraged; only 6% of municipalities tested plans
No approved updates to provincial plan since 2012	Provincial plan was not tested
Business Continuity Plans	
No current documented policies or procedures for business continuity plans	Government plan did not include all relevant entities
Government and departmental plans not regularly updated	Only one department tested its plan



## Conclusion

We conclude that the Department of Justice and Public Safety did not effectively manage Municipal Emergency Management Plans, the Provincial Emergency Management Plan, or the Government Business Continuity Plan. Emergency Management Plans were not consistently current, complete, or tested. The Government Business Continuity Plan lacked the comprehensive scope required to support continuity of all essential services and updating and testing were not regularly completed. There was an absence of current policies for both emergency management and business continuity planning. Longstanding weaknesses previously identified in our 2016 audit remained unresolved.

## Recommendations

As the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands is now responsible for the Emergency Services Branch, we recommend that they:

Municipal Emergency Management Plans	1. Document policies and procedures to guide the completion and management of Municipal Emergency Management Plans.
	2. Implement a centralized tracking system for Municipal Emergency Management Plans, to ensure completion, updating, and testing in accordance with policy.
	3. Ensure and document that municipalities are contacted on a regularly scheduled basis and are reminded to maintain and submit valid Emergency Management Plans in accordance with policy and legislation.
Provincial Emergency Management Plan	4. Document policies and procedures to guide the completion and management of the Provincial Emergency Management Plan.
	5. Ensure the Provincial Emergency Management Plan is updated and approved in accordance with policy.
	6. Ensure the Provincial Emergency Management Plan testing and debriefing is completed in accordance with policy.
Business Continuity Plans	7. Expand the scope of accountability for business continuity planning to include all relevant Crown corporations, agencies, and other entities, to ensure all government operations are fully considered.
	8. Document policies and procedures for the completion and management of all required Business Continuity Plans.
	9. Adopt and follow a schedule for the review, update, and approval of Government's Business Continuity Plan.
	10. Implement a government wide strategy to ensure that testing and debriefing are completed, tracked, and considered for plan adjustments, in accordance with policy.



### After reading this report, you may want to ask the following questions of government:

Given its responsibility for the development and implementation of an emergency management program for the province, how will the Department of Forestry, Agriculture and Lands:

1. Ensure that municipalities and the province have planned and prepared for emergencies?
2. Guarantee that plans are kept current, tested, and improved over time?
3. Confirm that the Government Business Continuity Plan covers all essential services in the event of a disruption or emergency?