



# Nova Scotia Guard Presentation

*Fostering Resilient & Vibrant Communities*

Recreation Nova Scotia Annual  
Conference 2024

# Today's Agenda

1. Background - NS Dept Emergency Management
2. Benefits of the new approach
3. Why the Province has created the NS Guard
4. What is the NS Guard?
5. What the NS Guard is NOT
6. How to become a member of the Guard
7. What deployment looks like
8. Q&As





Resilience is achieved when the community takes on a difficult challenge; mobilizes available human, financial and material resources; achieves success; and builds greater levels of capacity to take on more difficult problems.

The human, material, natural, and bricks and-mortar resources managed by the recreation sector are key, both to the providing immediate response to crises and to building capacity to prevent and respond to crises in the future.

*Rick Gilbert*

*“Parks and recreation (provides) essential and adaptable infrastructure that makes our communities resilient in the face of natural disasters and climate change.”*

National Recreation and Parks Association



## **ACTIVITY:**

As I walk through the presentation, think about a crisis/emergency situation that has occurred in your community within the past few years.

Identify ways the Nova Scotia Guard may have been able to assist and what skill sets might have been valuable to have in place at the time.

# Background to the NS Guard

September 2024 – (Bill 455) The Act was passed to Establish the Department of Emergency Management and the Nova Scotia Guard Act, to strengthen the province’s capacity to respond in emergencies through **improved planning and preparedness with partners and the Nova Scotia Guard.**

Emergency Management, Public Field Safety Communications and 911 are now under one roof



# Benefits of Proposed Approach

**Integrated whole-of-province model**

**Modern approach to emergency management**

**Authority and accountability**

**Minister has greater authority outside of declared states of emergency**





# Why is the Province creating the Nova Scotia Guard?

With increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, the Nova Scotia Guard will allow us to be:

- better prepared for emergencies
- better coordinated during an emergency
- Assist communities recover when needed



There are many instances where emergencies and/or disasters exceed a community's response capacity.



**Volunteers are one of the key resources for enhancing community resilience to disasters.**

**Spontaneous volunteers** are those who want to assist but are not affiliated with any part of the official emergency management response and recovery system and may not have relevant training, skills, or experience.



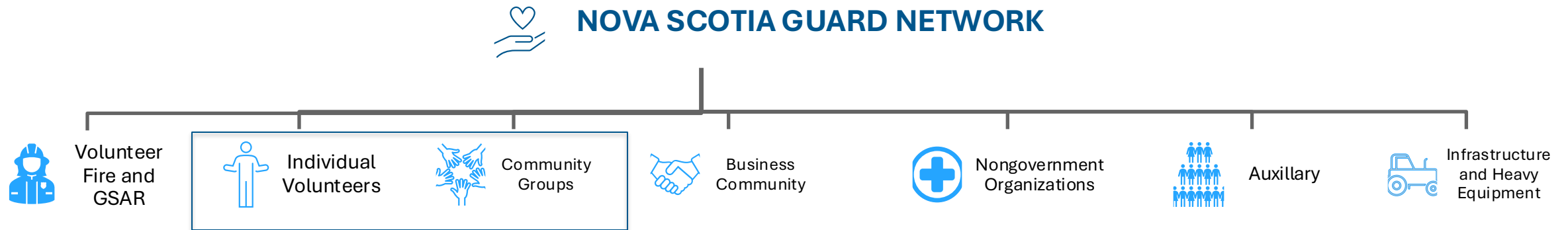
The lack of organization/knowledge about emergencies and disasters among spontaneous volunteers creates challenges and risks like liability and security issues.

## Examples:

1. Bringing food to first responders – no one to receive/distribute the food & no cold storage to keep things fresh.
2. Dropping of clothing/home goods – no one to receive, sort, and/or distribute to those in need



# What is the Nova Scotia Guard?



- ❖ *An opportunity to harness the goodwill of Nova Scotians.*
- ❖ *Connecting people and community groups who want to help with volunteer opportunities in preparation for, during, and after emergencies.*
- ❖ *Ensuring each person and group can contribute their own unique skills.*



# How will volunteers engage with the Guard?

	Examples:	Requirements:
<b>Level 1</b> <b>General Volunteer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comfort Centres</li> <li>• Sand-bagging</li> <li>• Donation sorting and bagging</li> <li>• Supporting other emergency responders e.g. dog-walking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed Enhanced Police Information Check (E-PIC)</li> <li>• Participate in an <b>Orientation</b> provided by the NS Guard (Safety, Respectful Workplace for Volunteers)</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2</b> <b>Demonstrated Skill</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chain-Saw/Brush-Clearing</li> <li>• Support for Vulnerable Persons (e.g., groceries, recreation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed E-PIC and Orientation</li> <li>• Additional <b>targeted training</b> provided by the NS Guard</li> <li>• Credentials verified</li> <li>• Deploy in partnership with Community Groups and Emergency Responders</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3</b> <b>Advanced Skill</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced first aid</li> <li>• Incident Management (400)</li> <li>• Disaster Recovery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed E-PIC and Orientation</li> <li>• Credentials verified</li> <li>• <b>Advanced Training</b> provided by partners</li> </ul>



# What the Guard is Not:

- The NS Guard is not a first responder – Fire, Police/RCMP, EHS are primary and first on site.
- The NS Guard will not replace or interfere with municipal EMOs, ground search & rescue (GSAR) or volunteer fire efforts.
- The NS Guard does not lead emergency response or care & comfort efforts – they are a resource to assist when called upon.



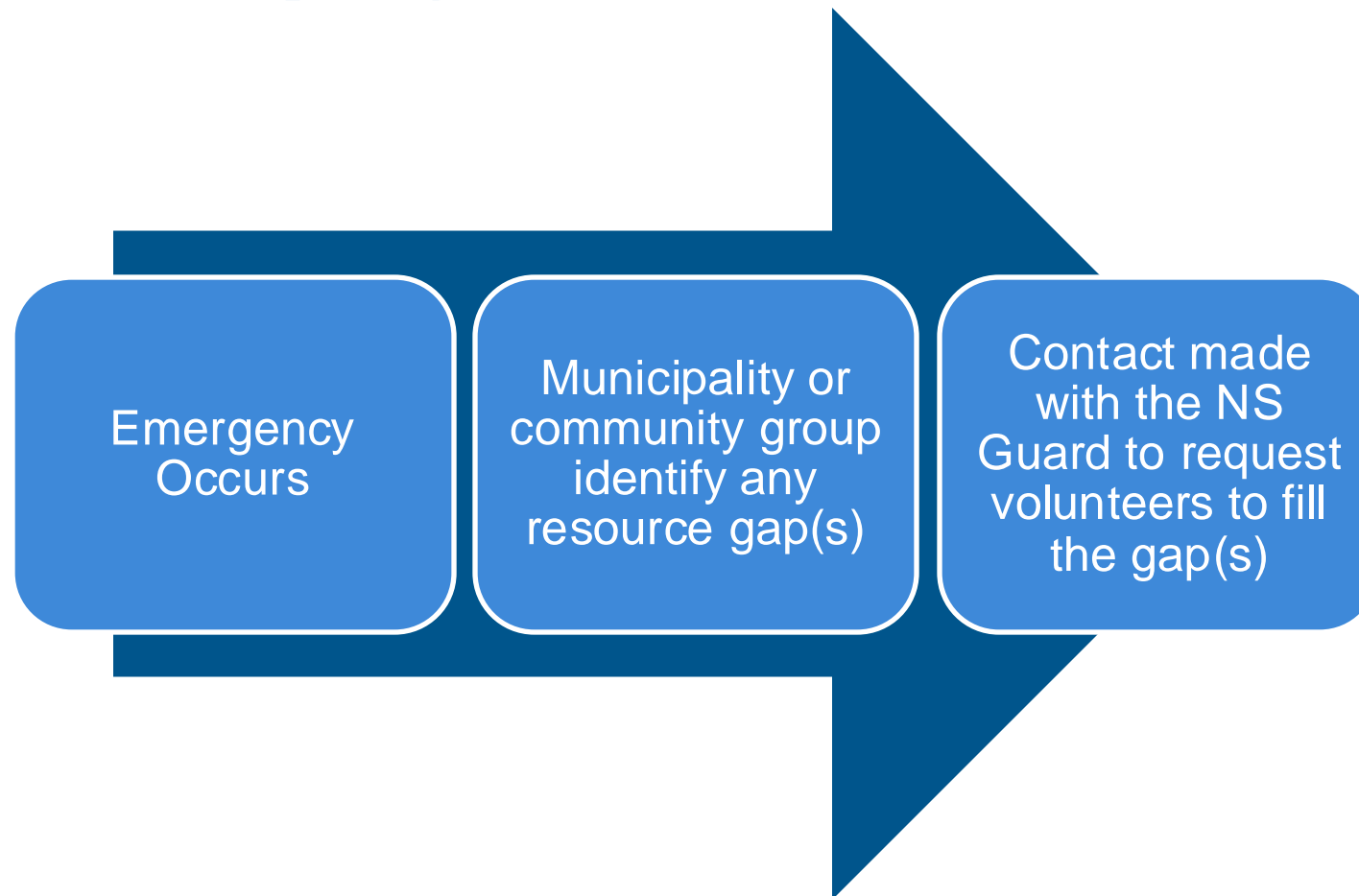
# How do you Become a Member of the Guard?

## It's as Easy as 1...2...3

1. Register in the online portal at <https://NSGUARD.ca>
2. Complete a criminal records check through the Red Cross (no charge)
3. Complete a 30-minute orientation (level 1)



# What will Deployment Look Like?



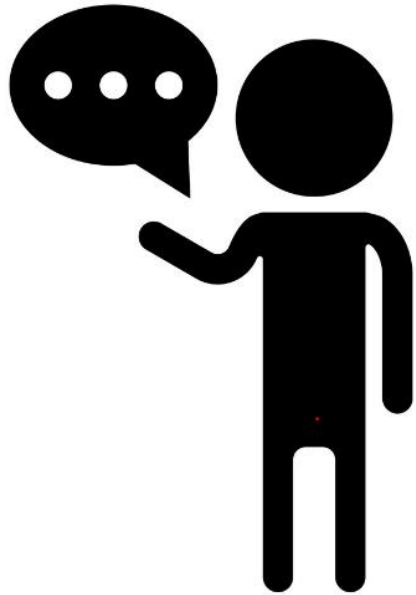
Note: Municipalities are always the first to respond to an emergency via their EMO



# What will Deployment Look Like?

- The data base of NS Guard volunteers can be filtered by geography, skill set, training, etc.
- Where possible, the NS Guard will deploy volunteers that represent the communities they are deployed to assist.





## SHARING:

Share ways the Nova Scotia Guard may have been able to assist and what skill sets might have been valuable to have in place at the time.

# How can you assist?



- Sign-up to become a member of the NS Guard
- Promote the NS Guard within your community centres/facilities
- Other?



# Building Resilience in Times of Crises

Exploring the evolving role of recreation in challenging circumstances

*By Rick Gilbert*

Look for the article in the November issue of the RNS online newsletter



# Questions/Feedback

To register: [nsguard.ca](https://nsguard.ca)

Need assistance with Registration? Call 211

Questions? [NSGuard@novascotia.ca](mailto:NSGuard@novascotia.ca)

