

# Mass Casualty Commission

APRIL 2022

||| MASS CASUALTY  
COMMISSION  
COMMISSION  
DES PERTES MASSIVES

# About the Commission

The Mass Casualty Commission is the **independent public inquiry** examining the April 18-19, 2020 mass casualty in Nova Scotia and working to provide meaningful recommendations to help protect Canadians in the future.

The Commission's role as a public inquiry is:

- ☑ to **investigate what happened**
- ☑ to **understand the broader context** and **related issues** that may have contributed
- ☑ to **provide meaningful recommendations** to help protect Canadians in the future
- ☒ *not* to determine guilt or assign blame
- ☒ *not* to award damages
- ☒ *not* to conduct a trial

## WHY MASS CASUALTY?

The events in April 2020 took the lives of many innocent people and left others with serious physical and emotional injuries. The scale of the loss and trauma caused fear, anger and grief in our communities, province and country. There were many types of harms over a wide geographic area. This is why we are using the term “mass casualty”.

**FAQs:** You can find the answers to many frequently asked questions at [masscasualtycommission.ca/faq](https://masscasualtycommission.ca/faq)

# Our Team & Approach



## The Commissioners

Honourable J. Michael MacDonald  
Leanne J. Fitch (Ret. Police Chief, M.O.M.)  
Dr. Kim Stanton

The Commission is led by three independent Commissioners, supported by a team of experts focused on investigations, legal counsel, research, policy, mental health and public engagement.

The Commission team is committed to our values:

Independence

Respect

Transparency

# Our Work

Our work involves a series of overlapping phases that build on each other, starting with piecing together a factual foundation of what happened, followed by an exploration of why and how it happened, which in turn will feed into findings and recommendations.



- Holding public proceedings including activities such as community and stakeholder sessions, public and Participant submissions.
- Drafting the final report with Commission findings and recommendations
- Exploring the broader context including issues like firearms access, police and service-provider responses, emergency communications and intimate partner violence
- Holding public proceedings including hearings and roundtables with Participants, experts, policy makers and others about their understanding of causes, context, circumstances
- Sharing initial information and insights and seeking input
- Understanding perspectives of those most affected, Participants, first responders, service providers, community members
- Obtaining documents, analyzing information and conducting research
- Carrying out investigations and speaking with witnesses
- Working with Participants to develop Foundational Documents, that organize and share an understanding of the massive volumes of information gathered by the Commission
- Holding public proceedings about gaps and information in the Foundational Documents

# Scale & Scope

As part of the Commission's ongoing independent investigation, the Commission has been gathering information about what happened, why and how. This work is taking place in consultation with the Participants and within an ambitious two-year time frame.

**17**

Crime scenes

**50,000+**

Documents including investigative files, emails, first responder notes & transcripts\*

**1,000+**

Video & audio files including first responder communications and CCTV footage\*

**200+**

Witness interviews and many site visits\*

**70**

Subpoenas\*

**61**

Participants including those most affected individuals and groups; represented by own counsel; taking part in many conversations and working meetings with the Commission team

**30+**

Foundational Documents developed in consultation with Participants and supported by thousands of source materials (see next slide)

**20+**

Commissioned Reports being prepared by independent experts focused on public policy, academic research and lessons learned from previous mass casualties

*\*As of April 2022*

# Foundational Documents

Foundational Documents efficiently organize and share a large volume of information (such as insights from institutional investigative files, site visits and witness statements) collected in the Commission's independent investigation into what happened during the April 2020 mass casualty.

## STEPS TO PREPARE AND SHARE FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

①

Gather and analyze information and evidence

②

Draft Foundational Documents to organize and share information

③

Consult with Participants to ensure accuracy

④

Present Foundational Documents during public proceedings and share them on website with source materials

⑤

Address any issues in the Foundational Documents during public proceedings

⑥

Update Foundational Documents as needed

# Phase 1 Proceedings: What Happened



- Building the factual foundation piece by piece, document by document, witness by witness
- Presenting Foundational Documents to the public
- Participant submissions about gaps or material differences in the Foundational Documents plus potential witnesses
- Hearing from witnesses in different ways (e.g. questioned as individuals or as part of witness panels) to help close gaps or address material differences
- Hearing from technical expert witnesses to provide more information about a topic or process
- Opportunities for in-person public attendance plus live webcast and online archive of all proceedings, Foundational Documents and source materials

# Phase 1 Foundational Documents: Progress

Portapique: April 18-19, 2020	First Responder Actions in Portapique	Containment In and Around Portapique	Overnight in Debert	2328 Hunter Road	Highway 4 - Wentworth	Highway 4 - Glenholme	Plains Road - Debert	Onslow Belmont Fire Brigade
Shubenacadie	Highway 224	Enfield Big Stop	Perpetrator's Access To and Use Of Decommissioned RCMP Vehicles and Associated Equipment, Kit and Clothing	Confirmation of Decommissioned Replica RCMP Vehicle	Firearms	Radio Communications System in Nova Scotia	Air support	Truro Police Service
Halifax Regional Police and Halifax District RCMP	RCMP Public Communications, Legislation and Regulation Regarding Public Alerting	Emergency Response Team	Overview of 911 Call-taking and Dispatch in Nova Scotia	RCMP Command Post, Operational Communications Centre and Command Decisions	Public Communications from the RCMP and Governments About the Mass Casualty			

● Presented to Public as of April 14, 2022

● Upcoming Presentations

# Phase 2 Proceedings: Why & How

3

## Findings & Recommendations

SUMMER 2022 – FALL 2022

2

## How & Why

FALL 2021 – SUMMER 2022

1

## What Happened

SPRING 2021 – SPRING 2022

- Broaden focus to look more at why and how the mass casualty happened, considering the causes, contexts and circumstances that may have contributed
- Identify clear links between what we have learned about what happened and the questions we are considering about why and how
- Issues to be explored through Commissioned Reports and public proceedings include:
  - Police resources and decision making
  - Public communications
  - Understanding mass casualties
  - Supporting communities after a mass casualty
  - Gender-based and intimate partner violence
  - Access to firearms

# Phase 2 Proceedings Format



- In addition to ongoing proceedings (with Foundational Documents and witnesses) focused on what happened, Phase 2 will include:
  - **Commissioned reports:** prepared by independent experts to help the Commissioners better understand related issues; focused on public policy, academic research and lessons learned from previous mass casualties.
  - **Roundtables:** subject-matter experts will provide their insights in a public discussion format
  - **Small group sessions:** people invited to share their experiences about areas that have surfaced from the factual record
- Participants will continue to have opportunities to provide input in shaping and contributing to these sessions
- Roundtables and small group sessions are non-adversarial opportunities for Commissioners to hear directly from people, including Participants, so members of the sessions need not be sworn – the focus here is not to garner specific evidence but rather to gain insights that can help inform recommendations.
- As with Phase 1, all Phase 2 activities will be held in public and webcast, in the presence of Commissioners and the media, with transcripts posted online afterwards

# Commissioned Reports

An important part of the Mass Casualty Commission's work is to explore the causes, context and circumstances giving rise to the April 2020 mass casualty in Nova Scotia. To support this work, the Commission has commissioned reports from independent experts and will begin sharing these publicly during Phase 2 proceedings.

Topics to be explored in the Commissioned Reports include:

- Police resources and decision making
- Public communications
- Understanding mass casualties
- Supporting communities after a mass casualty
- Gender-based and intimate partner violence
- Access to firearms

# Interim Report

As part of its mandate, the Commission is required to prepare an interim report to provide an update for May 1, 2022.

- ☑ The Interim Report outlines the steps the Mass Casualty Commission has been taking and the steps which we anticipate the Commission will continue to take to fulfill its mandate.
- ☒ The interim report will *not* include recommendations. At the end of the mandate, the Commission will submit a final report containing findings and recommendations to help make communities safer.
- ☑ There will continue to be opportunities for the Participants, the public and others to engage in the Commission's work and to help shape findings and recommendations.

# Community Outreach

Community input is important through many aspects of the Commission's work. For example, we received over 800 submissions to a call asking members of the public to share their experience of and perspectives on the mass casualty

The Commission team continues to reach out to community members and organizations for formal and informal discussions to inform the recommendations that can ultimately help make communities safer in the future.

Community organizations are also helping ensure that individuals are prepared for the information that will be shared by the Commission, and to help connect supports as needed. We are meeting with many organizations to gain insights and advice, and coordinate partnerships to help support communities.

## **ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

- ☑ Attend in person or watch webcast of public proceedings
- ☑ Public Submissions open to help shape recommendations
- ☑ Read Foundational Documents and Commissioned Reports

# Wellness Focus

The Commission cannot act as a service provider, but we want to make sure we can connect people with services, share useful information, and work with partners to support our communities. To achieve this we have:

- Liaised with all levels of government to confirm and share available supports
- Provided ongoing support to those most affected and anyone who contacts Commission directly
- Proactively reached out to those named in documents being released

Wellness and support resources are posted on the Commission's website: [masscasualtycommission.ca/support](https://masscasualtycommission.ca/support)  
You can also contact our Mental Health team anytime by calling 902.407.7532 (local) or 1.833.635.2501 or emailing [info@masscasualtycommission.ca](mailto:info@masscasualtycommission.ca)

# Stay Connected

For regular and reliable updates:

**Web:** [masscasualtycommission.ca](http://masscasualtycommission.ca)

**Email:** [info@masscasualtycommission.ca](mailto:info@masscasualtycommission.ca)

**Call:** 902.407.7532 (local) or 1.833.635.2501

**Facebook:** [facebook.com/masscasualtycommission](https://facebook.com/masscasualtycommission)

**Twitter:** [twitter.com/NSMassCasualty](https://twitter.com/NSMassCasualty)

## SPEAK UP

If you have information about the mass casualty to share with the Commission, please do not hesitate to get in touch.



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