

Community Open Houses

Materials and Resources

September 2021

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About the Open Houses

The Mass Casualty Commission hosted a series of public Open Houses in September 2021 to share information with community members about the Commission. The materials and resources in this package were shared with community members who attended. We want to thank everyone who came to our Open Houses—your participation, input, and feedback remains important to our process.

The format of the Open Houses was informal, drop-in style. Community members were welcome to come any time during the event. The setup of the space had Commission team members at tables sharing information about different aspects of our work and answering questions about the inquiry process. There were opportunities for community members to gather printed information and share feedback and input as well. The information shared was the same at each location, so we encouraged community members to attend the one that works best for them.

There were mental health and wellness resources on site at each location and a member of the Mental Health Team was available to provide support and information during each Open House.

For reference and as information, the locations and times of the four Open Houses hosted in September are below:

Sunday, September 26

Location: Debert Hospitality Centre, 130 Ventura Drive, Debert, NS

Time: 6:00PM to 8:00PM

Monday, September 27

Location: Douglas Street Recreation Centre , 40 Douglas St, Truro, NS

Time: 11:00AM to 1:00PM

Tuesday, September 28

Location: Legends Gaming & Convention Centre, 15 Legends Ave, Millbrook, NS

Time: 1:00PM to 3:00PM

Wednesday, September 29

Location: Wentworth Recreation Centre, 13752 Hwy 4, Wentworth, NS

Time: 4:30PM to 6:30PM

About the Commission

About the Mass Casualty Commission

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

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. While many people refer to those events as the “mass shooting” or “Portapique shootings”, there were many types of harm in addition to the gun-related deaths and the impact spanned a wide geographic area of Nova Scotia. This is why we are using the term *mass casualty* in the name of this Commission.

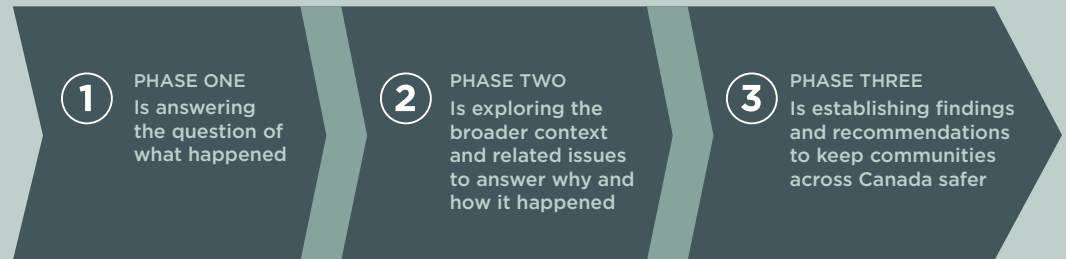
As a public inquiry, the Commission is not a criminal trial or a civil lawsuit. Our work cannot determine whether individuals are to be found guilty of a criminal offence or whether damages should be awarded—the Commission is not a court of law. Instead, a public inquiry is concerned with broader issues, unlike criminal and civil trials, which focus on narrow issues between the parties.

Stay in Touch





We want you to stay updated on how you can participate and contribute to our work, and how to contact us with questions or information.

Your input and involvement will play an important role in the Commission’s findings and recommendations. Together, we will make our communities safer.

The work of the Commission is organised into three key, overlapping Phases:



We are making steady progress on this work and are on track to complete the final report in November 2022.

-  [MassCasualtyCommission.ca](https://www.masscasualtycommission.ca)
-  Info@MassCasualtyCommission.ca
-  902-407-7532 (local)
-  1 833-635-2501 (toll-free)
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-  [Twitter.com/NSMassCasualty](https://twitter.com/NSMassCasualty)

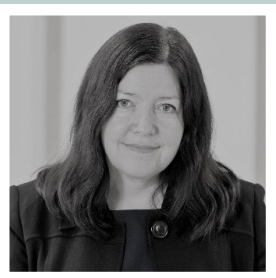
The Commissioners



The Honourable J. Michael MacDonald, the Commission's Chair, served as Chief Justice of Nova Scotia until his retirement in 2019. As Chief Justice, he championed judicial outreach initiatives with Nova Scotia's Mi'kmaw and Black communities.



Leanne J. Fitch retired from 34 years in municipal policing in 2019. She served seven of those years as Chief of Police for the Fredericton Police Force. She has expertise in community safety and wellbeing, policing, and organizational change.



Dr. Kim Stanton is a lawyer at Goldblatt Partners LLP in Toronto. She has extensive experience in social justice, Indigenous and equality rights, and constitutional law, and publishes in the areas of constitutional law, transitional justice, and public inquiries.

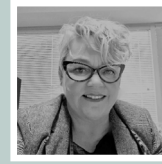
Commission Team

The Commissioners are supported by a team of experts helping to advance different aspects of the Commission's work. The teams below are led by the Commission's Executive Director and CAO, Christine Hanson, who joined the Commission from her role as Director and CEO of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission. The Commissioners and the Commission teams receive expert advice from Ronda Bessner, Senior Legal Advisor, who has played key roles in several public inquiries in Canada.



Investigations

Led by **Barbara McLean**, team members include seasoned investigators and analysts focused on uncovering and compiling information, conducting site visits and witness interviews, laying the groundwork for Foundational Documents, and helping to inform the record of what happened.



Mental Health

Led by **Mary Pyche**, team members include specialists in mental health and wellness focused on informing the design of the Commission's work to ensure it is trauma-informed, and providing wellness advice and supports to everyone taking part in our work, including on-site support during proceedings.



Research & Policy

Led by **Dr. Emma Cunliffe**, team members include experienced legal and policy specialists focused on exploring the broader context and related issues, including relevant legislation or policies, engaging the Research Advisory Board, laying the groundwork for expert roundtables, and helping to answer questions about why and how the mass casualty took place.



Community Liasion

Led by **Maureen Wheller**, team members are specialists in community relationships who work in the affected communities to build relationships with community organizations and individuals, gather input, and help people understand more about the Commission's work.



Legal

Led by the **Honourable Thomas Cromwell**, team members include experienced lawyers and legal practitioners focused on providing objective advice to the Commissioners, ensuring the orderly conduct of the inquiry process, including liaising with Participants and their counsel, and helping to collect evidence.



Communications & Public Engagement

Led by **Sarah Young**, team members include specialists in communications and public engagement focused on ensuring members of the public in Nova Scotia and Canada are informed about the work of the Commission and are able to take part and provide input.

Wellness & Mental Health Supports

Consider reading this information about the potential of being affected or overwhelmed when reading or hearing about distressing material.

Sometimes reading or hearing about a distressing or emotionally overwhelming experience can remind us of circumstances that are upsetting and disturbing. It can bring up a specific thought pattern or memory that is difficult to think about and could cause psychological distress. Having an immediate, short-term reaction is a usual way to feel. This is often referred to in research as having a “triggering effect: or a “flooding of distressing memories”.

The Commission is committed to doing its work in a way that is trauma-informed. This means we are doing our work in a way that minimizes the potential for further harm and re-traumatization, and to enhance safety, control, and resilience.

If you need help at any point in the Commission’s process, the Commission’s Mental Health team is here to help you by:

- **Connecting you directly with mental health services and other support providers, or listening to feedback on the resources currently available**
- **Sharing information on ways to continue building resiliency**
- **Discussing specific ways to participate that will not cause further harm or can reduce the harms**

If you have questions about mental health and wellness supports, or the resources listed, contact Mary Pyche, Director of Mental Health for the Commission.

Supports Available

Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Crisis Line

If you are experiencing overwhelming emotions, distress, or a mental health or addictions crisis, or are concerned about someone who is, the Provincial Mental Health Crisis Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This service is for all ages and you can call for yourself or because you have concern for someone else. You do not have to be in a crisis to call and nothing is too big or too small a reason to reach out. The staff responding when you call are skilled crisis clinicians. The NS Provincial Crisis Service can also provide the contacts for other 24/7 crisis services if you live outside of Nova Scotia.

Tel: 1-888-429-8167

211 Nova Scotia

211 is a free, confidential information and referral service that can connect you to thousands of programs and services offered by local community groups, non-profits and government departments across Nova Scotia, 24/7.

Tel: 2-1-1

www.ns.211.ca

Nova Scotia Mental Health and Addictions Intake Service

If you or a family member needs help, you can self-refer to a mental health or addictions clinic, service or program through the Nova Scotia Health Authority or IWK Health Centre.

Tel: 1-855-922-1122 (Monday - Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm)

www.mha.nshealth.ca

Kids Help Phone

A national helpline for young people between the ages of 5 and 20, where confidential and anonymous support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Tel: 1-800-668-6868 or Text: CONNECT to 686868

www.kidshelpphone.ca

Shelter Safe (Women's Shelters Nova Scotia)

If you are a woman experiencing abuse, there is someone you can reach out to any time of day or night.

Tel: 1-855-225-0220 (Provincial Domestic Violence Line, run 24/7 by the Transition House Association of Nova Scotia)

www.sheltersafe.ca

Victim Services

If you are in need of victim services, you can find available resources, support, and information through Nova Scotia's Victim Services Programs.

Tel: 902-424-3309 or toll free 1-888-470-0773 (Monday - Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm)

www.novascotia.ca/just/victim_services

Our Mandate & Work

Our Mandate

The Commission’s mandate assigns specific tasks to guide its work and to let the public know what to expect.

The Commission is required to **establish what happened** leading up to, during and after the mass casualty of April 18 and 19, 2020 in Nova Scotia. The Commission must also **review certain defined issues** that provide context to understand why and how the mass casualty occurred, including those listed below. Finally, the Commission must **produce a report** that includes these findings, lessons and resulting recommendations to help keep Canadian communities safer in the future.

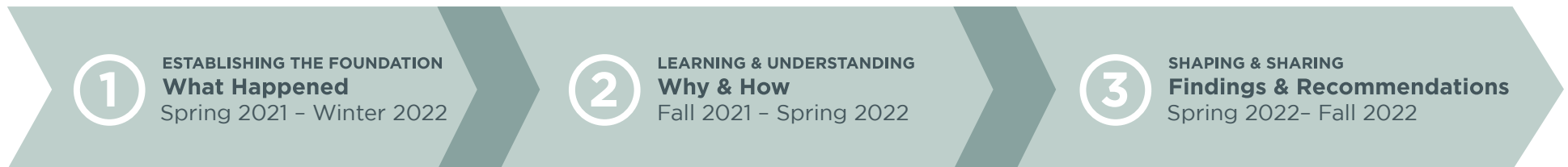
To view the full mandate as described in the Orders in Council visit masscasualtycommission.ca/about/mandate.

<p>1 ESTABLISH WHAT HAPPENED</p>	Causes, context and circumstances giving rise to the mass casualty	Emergency responses of police, including RCMP, municipal police forces and the Alert Ready program	Steps taken to inform, support and engage victims, families and affected citizens
	Communications between and within agencies and services	Communication with the public	Firearms access
<p>2 EXPLORE RELATED ISSUES</p>	Gender-based and intimate partner violence	Perpetrator interactions and relationship with police and social services	Police actions, policies, procedures, and training
	Findings, lessons and recommendations		
<p>3 PRODUCE A REPORT</p>	Findings, lessons and recommendations		

Our Work

The Mass Casualty Commission is an independent public inquiry created to examine the April 2020 mass casualty in Nova Scotia and to provide meaningful recommendations to help protect Canadians in the future.

Our work involves a series of overlapping key steps:



- **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**
- **Holding public proceedings including activities such as hearings and roundtables**, about the facts, existing policies and other issues

- **Exploring the broader context** including issues like firearms access, police and service-provider responses, emergency communications and intimate partner violence
- **Holding public proceedings including activities such as 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

- **Holding public proceedings including activities such as hearings and roundtables** with participants, experts, policy makers and others about their proposed recommendations
- **Creating opportunities for input** from those most affected, those who will be responsible for implementing recommendations, and the public
- **Drafting the final report** with Commission findings and recommendations

We will update this overview as our work advances. Every step of our work will be guided by our values of independence, respect and transparency.

- 🌐 [MassCasualtyCommission.ca](https://www.masscasualtycommission.ca)
- ✉ Info@MassCasualtyCommission.ca
- 📞 902-407-7532 (local)

- ☎ 1 833-635-2501 (toll-free)
- 📘 [Facebook.com/MassCasualtyCommission](https://www.facebook.com/MassCasualtyCommission)
- 🐦 [Twitter.com/NSMassCasualty](https://twitter.com/NSMassCasualty)

Survey & Feedback Cards

We also had **comment cards** and **feedback surveys** for community members at the Open Houses. If you'd like to share comments or feedback but did not get the chance at the Open House, or were not able, you can send it to Info@MassCasualtyCommission.ca or call 902-407-7532 (local) or 1-833-635-2501 (toll free).

MASS CASUALTY COMMISSION

We welcome your thoughts

We know you may have comments or questions that you would like to share privately. We want to hear from you in whatever way makes you feel most comfortable.

Please feel free to leave comments or questions on the other side of this comment card. You may also leave your contact information if you would like us to get back to you directly.

Please consider sharing your comments, feedback, or questions below:

Contact Info (optional):

Name _____

Email/Phone _____

Comment Card

MASS CASUALTY COMMISSION

Feedback Survey

Thanks for attending the Open House. Please consider sharing some feedback about your experience today on the back-side of this card. We will use this information to inform our planning and engagement efforts moving forward.

We want to hear from you

Did you find today's event helpful?

Very Somewhat Not at all

How have you been receiving information from the Commission?

Email Social Media Direct Mail Website Other: _____

How would you like to get updates from the Commission?

Email Social Media Direct Mail Website Other: _____

How do you prefer sharing feedback or input with the Commission?

Email Online In-Person Events Phone Other: _____

Do you have information to share with the Commission? If yes, please leave your name, email/phone and our team will follow up with you.

Name _____

Email/Phone _____

Feedback Survey

MASS CASUALTY COMMISSION

Share your Experience

While our team is focused on the details of what happened during the events of April 18-19, 2020, and the context and circumstances around them, we know the direct and indirect impacts of the mass casualty are significant, ongoing, and far-reaching for many people across Nova Scotia and Canada.

As we work to complete our mandate and make recommendations to keep communities safer, it is important for the Commission to understand how the mass casualty has impacted the personal lives of Canadians, and their sense of safety in their community. In the coming months we will be inviting people to submit a summary of their personal experience. We know that this could be difficult to do and we are also considering ways we can provide support before and during that process. Sharing your experience would be considered informal testimony. This means it would not be formal evidence.

On the other side of this card, there are some brief questions that will help us better understand how best to gather informal testimony from Nova Scotians and Canadians about how they have been impacted (i.e. your experience). We appreciate your initial feedback to help shape this process.

How would you like to share your experience?

Would you be interested in sharing your personal experience with the Commission?

Yes No Unsure If no or unsure, why? _____

Do you think you would be comfortable if your experience were shared publicly?

Yes Yes, but anonymously Probably not Definitely not

If you are willing, how would you like to share your story?

As a written submission to the Commission Share your experience out loud privately Share your experience in a small group setting

Answer a series of questions online or in writing about your experience Share your experience through a multi-media submission like music, art, poetry etc.

Other: _____

Would you be interested in support or guidance in advance of sharing your experience? This could include wellness and mental health supports, or guides for written submissions.

Yes No Unsure If yes or unsure, are there any specific supports you would like to be provided? _____

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you for your input. You can place this survey in a feedback box or hand it to any team member.

Experience Survey

Contact Card

To our community— thank you

We want to acknowledge and thank you for taking the time to attend our Open House and learn more about our work.

We are dedicated to gathering the facts and evidence so that we can provide the public with a thorough and clear understanding of what happened leading up to and during the April 2020 mass casualty. If community members have information that relates to the events of April 18–19, 2020, please contact us to talk to a member of our team.


Your insights, engagement, and feedback are important to us as we work towards recommendations to enhance public safety in Nova Scotia and across Canada. We look forward to engaging with you again soon.

Stay Updated and Get in Touch

 MassCasualtyCommission.ca

 Info@MassCasualtyCommission.ca

 902-407-7532 (local)

 1 833-635-2501 (toll-free)

 Facebook.com/MassCasualtyCommission

 Twitter.com/NSMassCasualty

WELLNESS AND CRISIS SUPPORT

Nova Scotia Provincial Crisis Line

 1-888-429-8167

If you have questions about the public Open Houses that were hosted in September 2021, or would like to share feedback or input on these materials, or the work of the Commission in general, please contact us by emailing **Info@MassCasualtyCommission.ca** or calling **902-407-7532 (local)** or **1-833-635-2501 (toll free)**.