

Facility Focus

Spring/Summer 2026

The official publication of the Recreation Facility Association of Nova Scotia (RFANS)

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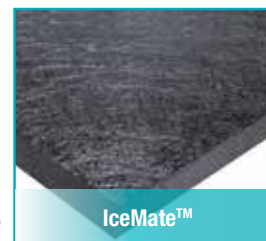


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Facility Focus

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Facility Focus is the official publication of the Recreation Facility Association of Nova Scotia (RFANS). It is published twice per year and is issued to members of RFANS and others associated with the operations of recreation facilities in the Atlantic Provinces.

Articles within this magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Board of Directors or the Association as a whole.

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RFANS Mission Statement

To provide leadership in developing, promoting and advocating excellence in recreational facilities, operations and personnel.

Our commitment is:

- To promote and encourage the professional development of recreation facility personnel and provide opportunities for this development;
- To act as a unified voice for recreation facility personnel regarding issues affecting facilities and their management;
- To improve communication between facilities;
- To promote the provision of high quality, safe recreation facilities.

President's Message



Looking Ahead: Navigating Change in the Year Ahead

Paul MacDonald, President, RFANS

As we transition from Fall/Winter season into our Spring/Summer season, I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the recent reduction in our core funding as a result of budget cuts by the Provincial government.

RFANS, like many funding recipients, has seen a 20% reduction in core funding for the upcoming fiscal year beginning April 1. While this will require some immediate adjustments, our focus remains on continuing to deliver our core services, training, and support to the sector. We will be looking at organizational efficiencies and how we can best utilize our resources to maintain the level of service our members rely on.

At the same time, RFANS remains committed to working closely with our Provincial partners to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization and the services we provide. We value this relationship and will continue to engage in discussions over the coming year to support a stable and effective path forward for both RFANS and the recreation facility sector.

RFANS has completed two major asset management projects that provides a comprehensive outline of the infrastructure needs for both arenas and pools in Nova Scotia. That data has been collected by our Technical Director Bud MacInnis and has been given to the Province. Hopefully, this will give government departments the tools they need to plan future funding.

These projects are an example of what RFANS can accomplish with a properly funded program. We are one of the few or maybe the only jurisdiction in the country that have collected this type of data which is critical to understanding the condition of recreation facilities across the Province.

Another new partnership initiated by our Executive Director, Jennie Greencorn, at the request of the Board is with the Province's Department of Emergency Management (DEM). Recent wildfires and weather events had shown a gap between the expectations of local DEM's and facility operators. Through Jennie's efforts, RFANS has established a working relationship with the provincial DEM that opened a dialogue that should prove very beneficial moving forward in emergency situations.

Looking ahead, RFANS will be sending out a survey to both members of the organization and those in the sector. We are hoping people take the time to respond to help us with our advocacy efforts, training programs and governance. We are still working out the final details. Keep an eye on your in-box for further details.

We also have our AGM coming up soon which include Board elections. I would encourage any member who has an interest in joining the Board please contact a Board member.

Until next time, I hope everyone has great Spring and Summer.

Thank You!



Thank you to the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage for their continuous support. The Recreation Facility Association of Nova Scotia continues to offer training, programs and educational resources throughout Nova Scotia because of your contribution.

Executive Director Message



A Year in Review and a Sector Under Pressure

Jennie Greencorn, Executive Director, RFANS

Welcome to the Spring/Summer issue of *Facility Focus*. It has been nearly a year since our last issue, and while a lot has happened, one thing remains clear, our sector continues to face increasing pressure.

Over the past year, RFANS has been on the road, in facilities, and in conversation with operators across the province. Through our regional meetings this past fall, we heard consistent themes: aging infrastructure, lifecycle planning, staffing challenges, risk management, rising operating costs, and the ongoing need for practical, accessible training and good communication with patrons and staff.

Those conversations are now being reinforced by the recent Nova Scotia provincial budget, which includes reductions to funding and community grant programs in the recreation sector. These investments are critical to maintaining facilities and keeping the provinces recreation spaces accessible and affordable. Without that support, many facilities, particularly in small and rural communities, will face difficult decisions around operations, upgrades, and long-term sustainability.

Infrastructure remains a key issue. Facilities across Nova Scotia are managing aging buildings and systems while trying to meet modern expectations for accessibility, safety, and efficiency. This has a direct impact on day-to-day operations, and it's an area where continued attention and investment are needed.

Recreation facilities are more than buildings. They are essential community infrastructure, places where people connect, stay active, and access important supports. We need to continue to communicate that value clearly, especially in times like this.

On the training front, we continue to evolve. Feedback from our regional meetings made it clear that a centralized approach isn't enough. Facilities are asking for more mobile, flexible, and regionally relevant training opportunities. RFANS is responding by looking at how we deliver training differently, partnering where it makes sense and focusing on getting training directly into communities. At the same time, we continue to navigate challenges related to participation, scheduling, and aligning training with the diverse needs of facilities across the province. This is ongoing work, but it's a priority.

We are also continuing to strengthen our partnership with the Department of Emergency Management (DEM). Recreation facilities are increasingly being recognized as critical assets in emergency situations, whether as comfort centres, warming spaces, or coordination hubs. This fall, RFANS will be reaching out to facilities to collect data on emergency preparedness and capacity, helping ensure facilities receive required training and are better integrated into local and provincial planning.

Behind the scenes, RFANS continues to focus on organizational development and governance, strengthening our internal structure so we can better support the sector now and into the future. This includes refining board processes, committee work, and how we engage with both members and the broader sector.

To our members—thank you. We value your continued support, your engagement, and the work you do every day in your communities. RFANS exists to support you, and your input continues to shape the direction of our work.

If you are interested in getting more involved, whether through committees, regional engagement, or sharing your expertise, we encourage you to reach out. We also encourage you to attend our upcoming Atlantic Recreation and Facilities Conference in Halifax at the Westin Nova Scotian, May 20-22. More info at www.arfc.ca

There is no question the road ahead will have its challenges. But there is also opportunity in how we respond, how we work together, and how we continue to advocate for the important role recreation facilities play across Nova Scotia.

Special thanks to our support team:



Brittany Hunter
RFANS Administrative Assistant &
Advertising Sales Manager



Kaden Medve-Racine
Marketing & Communications
Coordinator

Special thanks to Kaden for his work and contributions to this issue of the Facility Focus.

In Memorium

Bill Cruickshank

It is with profound sadness and heavy hearts that we share the sudden and untimely passing of our friend and colleague, Bill Cruickshank.

Bill's passing came as a shock to all of us, and the loss has been deeply felt across the recreation facility community.

Bill dedicated his entire career to supporting recreation facilities in Nova Scotia and across Atlantic Canada. He served as Executive Director of RFANS for over 18 years before moving in 2010 to his role as Vice President Eastern Canada for Nustadia Recreation Inc. There he served as General Manager of the RBC Centre and Greenfoot Energy Centre with Nustadia Recreation and also oversaw the operations of the Emera Oval, LeBrun Arena and All-Weather Fields. He later returned to RFANS, in a volunteer capacity, as the Vice President of our Board and a training instructor, continuing to give freely of his time, his leadership, expertise and perspective to the organization he helped shape.

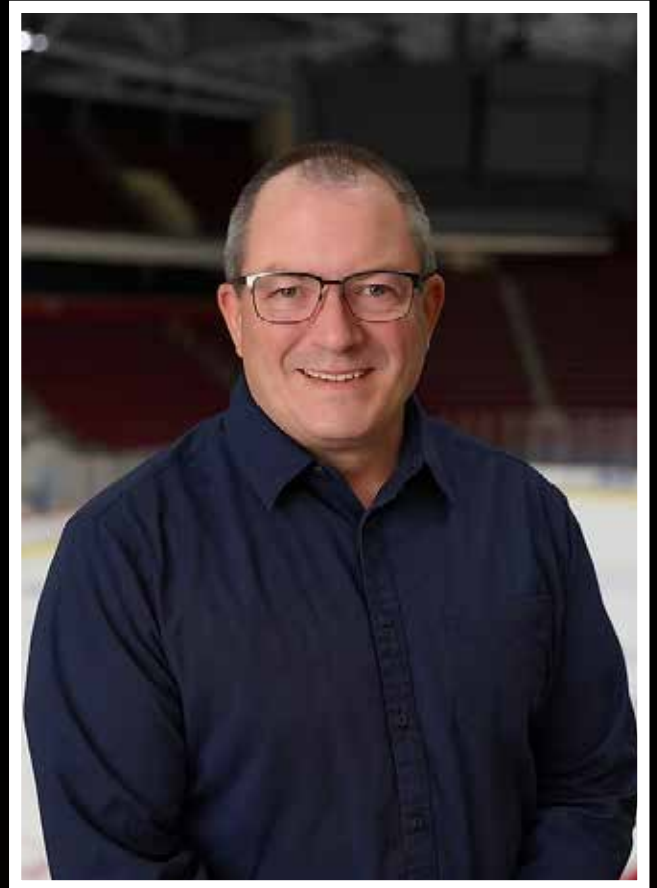
For more than 30 years, Bill was a cornerstone of the sector and of our association. He was a mentor, an advisor, a trusted colleague, and a steady, calming presence in both good times and challenging ones. Solid, thoughtful, and always willing to help, Bill brought a grounded perspective and a sharp sense of humour that kept us all in check. You always knew where you stood with Bill and you knew he had your back.

To many of us, he was more than a colleague, he was our friend. Someone who showed up. Someone who supported others without hesitation. Someone who made a lasting impression.

In both his life and his passing, Bill has left an enormous impact on our sector and on the people within it.

We extend our deepest condolences to Bill's family, whom he loved dearly, his friends, his colleagues across the country, and all who knew and respected him.

We share in your grief and loss. He will be deeply missed.



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via NSCC Akerley Campus, Dartmouth, NS
Registration deadline is November 13, 2026



Certified Pool Operators Courses (Pool & Hot Tub Alliance)

National Swimming Pool Foundation Certification (NSPF)

May 5 - 7, 2026 - East Hants Aquatic Centre, Elmsdale, NS
November 3 - 4, 2026 - Cole Harbour Place, Cole Harbour, NS



Sports Turf Management & Maintenance Courses

May 12 - 14, 2026 - RBC Centre, Dartmouth, NS



Building Maintenance Course

In Partnership with the Alberta Association of Recreation Facility Personnel

April 29 - 30, 2026 - RATH Eastlink Community Centre, Truro, NS

Arena Level 1 & Ice Maintenance Course

In Partnership with the Alberta Association of Recreation Facility Personnel

TBD



Playground Inspection Course

Canadian Playground Safety Institute (CPSI)

May 26-29, 2026 - Community Credit Union Business Innovation Centre, Amherst, NS
Register @ www.cpsionline.ca or call 902-870-7634 for more details

Arena Ice Installs

If you are interested in an arena ice install in the Summer or Fall 2026, please contact Bud MacInnis @ 902-867-0898 or contact training-rfans@sportnovascotia.ca

RFANS can also customize training, education or professional development for your staff.

For more information: please contact Bud MacInnis @ 902-867-0898 or training-rfans@sportnovascotia.ca
Or Jennie Greencorn @ 902-870-7634 or rfans@sportnovascotia.ca

Our Partners:



2026 Professional Development Courses

RFANS has partnered with the Ontario Recreation Facilities Association (ORFA) to provide a broad range of professional development courses available to RFANS members.



Certificate in Ice Facility Operations

Take advantage of this career-enhancing opportunity to build your skills and knowledge in the field of ice operations! Successfully complete these four courses (minimum 60% exam grade) to receive your certificate:

- Basic Arena Refrigeration
- Ice Maintenance and Equipment Operations
- Ice Making and Painting Technologies
- Legal Awareness I - Supervising in a Recreation Environment



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Online Self-Study Courses

ORFA's self-study online courses are available **24 hours a day, 7 days a week** allowing you to learn at your own pace and in your own environment. These courses provide you with easy access to course information, resource materials, videos, practice quizzes, assignments, grade postings, certificates, and transcripts. All self-study courses and their respective exams must be completed within 30 days upon course enrollment.

Courses currently available include:

- Basic Arena Refrigeration
- Ice Maintenance and Equipment Operations
- Ice Making and Painting Technologies
- Legal Awareness I - Supervising in a Recreation Environment
- Legal Awareness II - Managing in a Recreation Environment
- Safe Ice Resurfacer Operator
- Safe Arena Refrigeration Plant Owner/Operator
- Recreation Facility Cleaning, Disinfection and Sanitization Principles
- Certified Ice Technician (CIT) Recertification Challenge Exam (only available to CIT holders)
- Certified Ice Technician (CIT) Recertification Course (only available to CIT holders)
- Public Skating Monitor

For course registration contact:

Jennie Greencorn, Executive Director
Recreation Facility Association of Nova Scotia
T: (902) 425-5450 ext 330 | C: (902) 870-7634
rfans@sportnovascotia.ca | www.rfans.com

For course
descriptions and fees,
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LOGBOOKS

Logbooks available for order are as follows:

- Pool Inspection & Maintenance • Skateboard Park Inspection & Maintenance
- Arena Inspection & Maintenance • Playground and Sport Court Inspection & Maintenance

For more details: call us @ 902-425-5450 ext 330. Logbooks are available for order year round and can be ordered by contacting RFANS by email or phone.

Prices and information available at www.rfans.com

RFANS has partnered with the Ontario Recreation Facilities Association (ORFA) to bring a Certificate in Ice Facility Operations to Nova Scotia!

The courses required for successful completion are:

- Basic Arena Refrigeration • Ice Making and Painting Technologies
- Ice Maintenance and Equipment Operations
- Legal Awareness- Health and Safety for Supervisors in Recreation

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Recreation Facility Association of Nova Scotia

Memberships

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- **Individual** **\$85.00+HST**
 - A person not directly associated with a facility, but interested in facility operations
 - Student
- **Facility** **\$200.00+HST**
 - Private or Board operated facilities
 - Universities
- **Municipal** **\$200.00+HST** – 1 Facility;
 \$300.00+HST – 2 to 5 Facilities;
 \$500.00+HST – 6 or more Facilities
 Municipalities which operate recreation facilities
- **Corporate** **\$250.00+HST**
 - Any business, supplier or not-for-profit



Membership Benefits

- Monthly newsletter (digital mail-out)
- Facility Focus magazine twice a year (1 per facility) plus a digital copy
- Discounted rates on: courses and conferences, Atlantic Recreation & Facilities Conference and Trade Show (ARFC), partnerships/sponsorship, advertising rates
- Notification of current training opportunities
- First preference in advertisement in Facility Focus
- Resources and information for policies, trends and other requirements
- Free access to attend the AGM
- Notification of funding opportunities
- Voting eligibility for the Board of Directors elections and the eligibility to hold office

Memberships are renewed annually and follow the fiscal year (April 1st to March 31st). Pro-rated rates for memberships received after April 1st can be negotiated.

For more details on becoming a member, renewing your membership or member benefits:

Check out our website @ www.rfans.com/membership

Or call: (O) 902-425-5450 ext 330 | (C) 902-870-7634 | rfans@sportnovascotia.ca

We want to hear from YOU!

Are you doing something new or different in your facility? Does your company have important or interesting information to share about recreation facility operations? Are you selling equipment or looking to post a job? RFANS wants to know!

We'd love to share you information with our members!

Contact Jennie at rfans@sportnovascotia.ca or call 902-425-5450 ext 330

ORFA Launches New Recreation Risk Management Manual

By Ontario Recreation Facilities Association



In Collaboration with



For more than 40 years, the ORFA has focused on recreation facility risk awareness and reduction strategies — it is the foundation to most everything we do as an association. ORFA Past President Tony Brenner first introduced Legal Awareness in the early 1980s. Being employed in a recreation post-secondary environment, he was exposed to the topic of risk and the importance of identifying and reducing liability. He brought these lessons to the rest of the industry.

Over the years, ORFA has watched as members were challenged legally for their action or failure to take appropriate action. Lessons learned have — and continue to — shape our professional educational and accreditation pathways. At times, these lessons have resulted in shifts of behaviour in our business. We remain committed to ensuring that significant events are not repeated because of a lack of awareness.

Since Brenner first introduced the topic, there have been several other industry leaders who have contributed to improving the original materials. Past Presidents Greg Wright, Fred Horvath, and Mark Reinert have all played such a role. ORFA's Director of Training, Research and Development, Terry Piche has acted as the gatekeeper to much of this information.

His vision was to take all contributions and put them all under one roof. This was recently completed in partnership with Intact Public Entities (IPE) who helped co-author the first version of the ORFA Risk Management Manual.

The document has been designed as an easy-to-read resource that captures all currently known recreation risk related topics and tools that have and continue to impact recreation facility operations and management. The objective of the manual is to provide awareness of key risk management information when developing policy, procedures, contracts and/or risk management controls. The content was developed from both a practitioner and professional risk reduction lens based on past experiences from the frontlines or an insurance claim experience.

ORFA and IPE agreed that the manual should not be Ontario-specific so that it could be applicable to any region. However, for ORFA members, much of the content is supported by more detailed documents found in the online Resource Centre or discussed in detail in the ORFA course Legal Awareness II — Managing in a Recreation Environment course. The manual is broken down into the following topics:



RISK MANAGEMENT

- **The Recreational Legal Landscape** — legal responsibilities and previous legal cases.
- **The Legal System** — from the arrival of the writ to mounting a defence.
- **Recreational Infrastructure Management** — the different codes, Acts and Regulations that directly impact facility operations.
- **Human Resource Management** — roles and responsibilities associated with managing staff.
- **Legislative Resource Management** — all other governance that may impact recreation pending the provided services.
- **What is Risk Management** — a forensic evaluation as to what creating and implementing a risk management plan includes.
- **Applying Risk Management Principles** — a collection of proven risk reduction tools.
- **Identifying Recreational Risk Exposure** — provides a tutorial on how to develop a keen key to high-risk situations.
- **Reducing Recreational Risk Exposure** — how to mediate what has been identified as a high-risk situation.
- **Proven Risk Controls** — a collection of tools from past experiences or proven operational activities.
- **Recreational Risk Management Challenges** — a look on how recreation activities have changed over the years and what risks have been produced and conquered.

The manual is considered a live document owned by the members who are invited to contribute to its improvement at anytime. The ORFA would like to recognize IPE staff members Jessica Jaremchuk and Tracy Eso for their contribution and support of the manual's development. The ORFA would be pleased to showcase the manual at regional meetings or industry events.

To learn more about how to access the complimentary digital manual, please email info@orfa.com.

This article appeared in *Facility Forum* magazine, Winter 2025 issue <https://www.orfa.com/eMag> and is reprinted here with permission.

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TECHNICAL DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Contributed by Bud MacInnis

Technical Director, Recreation Facility Association of Nova Scotia

As the Recreation Facility Association of Nova Scotia Technical Director, I continue to visit facilities and focus on Aging Infrastructure, staffing and training. Across the Province, arenas are heavily used however aging buildings, equipment and the need for more staffing are common issues. Almost half of our facilities require major work, replacement or overhauls. Most facilities require more training for staff. We see more turn over of staff in our facilities than ever before.

Last Fall Paul MacDonald and I attended the Aging Infrastructure Symposium in Ontario host by the Ontario Recreation Facility Association (ORFA) and saw that they have the same issues we have, just on a much larger scale due the population and number of facilities in Ontario. Topics at the Symposium were Accessibility, Life-cycle Planning, Insurance, Lessons Learned, Retrofit vs New Build, Efficiency, Climate, Staffing and Funding. Sound familiar?

In November, I attended the IPE, Institute of Power Engineers Conference. It was great to see the focus was on Refrigeration this year. There are 17 apprentices enrolled in RFANS' Second Class Refrigeration course this year. RFANS continues to develop a new IPO, Ice Plant Operator Program that should help more facilities staff their arenas with trained personnel. 73% of our arenas operate ammonia plants that require ticketed operators. At present that means a 4th Class Power Engineer or 2nd Class Refrigeration ticket is required. Upon approval by the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration, the Ice Plant Operator ticket will be another option and good fit for our facilities. Regardless of the type of refrigerant, our facilities should have properly trained operators for safety and efficiency.

Last Summer, I did facility visits in most of the 53 Swimming Pools we have in the Province. We partnered with Swim Nova Scotia and Aquatic Associates to complete a feasibility study. We have 28 indoor and 25 outdoor pools in the Province. 44 pools have 5 lanes or more. Almost all pools in Nova Scotia are 25-metre pools. In Canada, there are 601 25-metre pools and 70 50-metre pools. Some of our indoor pools close for the Summer probably because

we have one of the largest pools in the world, the Atlantic Ocean. Pools are facing the same issues as our arenas, aging infrastructure. Our biggest asset is the staff and volunteers that work so hard to maintain our recreation facilities.

Regional meetings took place across the Province in the Fall to discuss issues and future plans in our facilities. Having managers and operators from different facilities come together gives everyone the chance to learn from each other. Good chance the issue you have was already solved by another facility. We met with chief engineers in facilities with operators in our Second Class Refrigeration Course to discuss the important role they in ensuring their operators are successful.

We continue to provide courses across the Province and beyond. Everette Tucker, Saunders Equipment, and I did an ice resurfacers course in Campbellton, NB in December for their staff. Our Second Class Refrigeration course runs from January to June. We did a practical component of the RPO2 at the Zatzman Sportsplex in January. Mid-season course was hosted at Cole Harbour Place in February that was very well attended. We have upcoming Building Maintenance, Sport Turf and Playground Inspector courses planned for this Spring.

In February, we introduced a new course, Ice Installation Training Package. This course will have two options, Arena Level 1 Theory and Practical (3 days) or Practical only (2 days). RFANS installed the of ice at the new facility at Dalhousie University, the Oulton-Stanish Centre with their staff. It has been 13 years since Dalhousie had an ice surface on campus. It was great working with their staff in their facility providing the training that they will need going forward. We have two more Ice Installation programs planned for this Summer. This is proving to be a great opportunity to train all your staff in your facility using your equipment. The program would require having the floor clean and at the proper temperature before the start of the course. Day 1 would be Arena Level 1 theory in the classroom. Day 2 would be sealing the floor, painting the surface white, sealing the white paint and building ice. Day 3 would be measuring, painting lines, installing textile lines and logos, sealing all of the paint and textile then start building ice. At this point the staff would take over and build ice for the next two or three days until the proper thickness is reached and ready for skating.

Going forward, focus should be on Infrastructure, Mechanical, Accessibility, Emergency Preparedness and Staff Training. Planning is an important part of this. Taking an inventory of what you have and the age of that inventory will help in planning for future upgrades. Everyone at RFANS is here to help. If we don't know the answer to your question, we can find the person or group that can help with issues facing facilities today and in the future.

Bud MacInnis
Technical Director, Recreation Facility Association of Nova Scotia
training-rfans@sportnovascotia.ca
902-867-0898 (mobile)





Recreation Facility
Association
of Nova Scotia

RECREATION FACILITY ASSOCIATION OF NOVA SCOTIA REGIONAL ARENA SITE VISITS

PROVINCIAL SUMMARY

WINTER/SPRING 2023-24 AND 2024-25

PURPOSE OF THE SITE VISITS

RFANS initiated a province-wide arena site visit program to build a consistent database on the number, type, and condition of recreation facilities across Nova Scotia. The focus is on capital infrastructure, accessibility, and training/workforce capacity. The goal is to provide reliable data to support provincial planning, funding decisions, and emergency preparedness.

PROVINCIAL CONTEXT (TO DATE)

- Total arenas in Nova Scotia: **66**
- Arenas visited to date: **63**
- Ice pads represented: **79**
- Curling rinks (not included in this phase): **36**

PROVINCIAL FACILITIES PROFILE

- Facilities visited by region:
 - Cape Breton - 16
 - Central - 11
 - Fundy - 9
 - Highland - 10
 - South Shore - 7
 - Valley - 10
- Ownership:
 - **38 of 66** arenas (**58%**) are municipally owned or joint municipal/board facilities
 - **18 (27%)** are board-run;
 - **10 (15%)** are privately owned.

MECHANICAL & OPERATING SYSTEMS SNAPSHOT

- Refrigeration:
 - **48 of 66** arenas (**73%**) operate ammonia plants;
 - **13** arenas (**20%**) operate Freon-Fluorocarbon based systems;
 - **4** arenas (**6%**) operate Ice Kube;
 - **1** arena (**1.5%**) operate CO₂ systems.
- Lighting:
 - **61 of 66** arenas (**92%**) upgraded to LED;
 - **5 (8%)** still rely on older lighting systems.
- Heat recovery:
 - **53 of 66** arenas (**80%**) have heat recovery systems;
 - **13 (20%)** do not.
- Low-E ceilings:
 - **41 of 66** arenas (**62%**) have Low-E ceilings;
 - **25 (38%)** do not.
- Water treatment:
 - **16 of 66** arenas (**24%**) have water treatment systems in place;
 - **50 (76%)** do not.



Recreation Facility
Association
of Nova Scotia

REGIONAL ARENA SITE VISITS

PROVINCIAL SUMMARY

WINTER/SPRING 2023-24 AND 2024-25

KEY INFRASTRUCTURE FINDINGS

- Refrigeration Plants:
 - **28 of 66 (42%)** require major work, full replacement or significant overhauls;
 - **38 of 66 (58%)** are rated in very good condition.
- *Ice resurfacers:
 - **33** units require replacement or maintenance;
 - **52** units are rated in very good condition
- *Dehumidifiers:
 - **58** units require replacement or maintenance;
 - **42** units are rated in very good condition
- Signage:
 - **51 of 66** arenas (**77%**) require indoor and/or outdoor signage upgrades;
 - **15 (23%)** report signage in good condition.
- Scoreboards/clocks:
 - **25 of 66** arenas (**38%**) have aging or inadequate scoreboards/clocks requiring replacement or upgrades;
 - **37 (56%)** have newer or upgraded systems.
- Sound systems:
 - **23 of 66** arenas (**35%**) report aging or inadequate sound systems;
 - **40 (61%)** report systems in good or upgraded condition.
- Roof and structural needs are emerging and will require further prioritization as data from all regions is consolidated. Several assets are approaching end-of-life and will require capital planning.

*Note: Some facilities have multiple Ice resurfacers and Dehumidifiers

TRAINING & WORKFORCE NEEDS

- Facilities report a need for more training, especially in refrigeration operations, safety and compliance, and Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI), to ensure consistent provincial/regional standards.
- Currently, only 3 arenas indicated they have structured training programs in place, highlighting a significant training gap across facilities.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS STATUS

- Information on generators and EMO integration is still being gathered while many arenas are expected to serve as emergency centres despite varying levels of backup power and emergency preparedness that need further evaluation.

ACCESSIBILITY FINDINGS

- **36 of 66** arenas (**55%**) feel they generally meet accessibility expectations within their current understanding; **30 (45%)** explicitly note that more work is required.
- Facilities are planning accessibility upgrades, such as improvements to entrances, washrooms, ramps, and viewing areas, but overall awareness of updated provincial accessibility standards remains limited, and formal allocation policies have yet to be established.

SUGGESTED INFRASTRUCTURE & INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

- Address lifecycle and condition issues in the region, as **28 of 66** refrigeration plants (**42%**) require major work, replacement or overhauls.
- Plan for phased replacement or maintenance of ice resurfacers, as **33** units have reached the end of their service life and pose reliability risks.
- Address performance and reliability gaps of dehumidifiers, as **58** units require replacement or maintenance.
- Address signage gaps, prioritizing the **51 of 66** arenas (**77%**) that require indoor/outdoor wayfinding and safety signage upgrades.
- Prioritize replacement or upgrade of aging scoreboards/clocks in **25 of 66** arenas (**38%**).
- Plan for sound system upgrades in **23 of 66** arenas (**35%**) where systems are outdated or inadequate.
- Expand water treatment systems beyond the **16** arenas (**24%**) that currently have them, to support ice quality and equipment longevity.
- Continue modernizing heat recovery, lighting, and other core mechanical systems, while closely monitoring refrigeration, roofs, and structural elements nearing end of life.

SUMMARY

Across the province, arenas are heavily used, municipally owned community assets that have made meaningful progress in energy efficiency and modernization. However, aging building systems and equipment, outdated supporting infrastructure, and ongoing accessibility gaps underscore the need for sustained, province-wide capital investment to ensure arenas remain safe, reliable, accessible, and inclusive.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Electric vs Propane Ice Resurfacers

What facility operators should consider before purchasing a new machine

Contributed by RFANS

For most ice arenas, the ice resurfacer is one of the most visible pieces of equipment in the building, and arguably the most important. If the ice quality isn't good, everyone notices.

When the time comes to replace an aging ice resurfacer, facility managers often face a familiar question: Should we stick with propane or move to electric? Both options are widely used across Canada, and each comes with advantages and trade-offs.

Understanding the differences can help operators make the right decision for their facility, budget, and operational goals.

Before we get into the details, it's worth noting that this article is intended strictly as an informational overview. Like many pieces of equipment in the recreation facility world, operators often develop strong preferences based on their experience, similar to how someone might swear by a Chevy while someone else will only drive a Ford. Both can do the job well. The same is true for ice resurfacers. This article, or any images included, aren't meant to favour one type or model of machine over another, and it's not comparing specific brands or manufacturers. Instead, the goal is simply to outline the functional differences between propane and electric resurfacing technology so facility operators can better understand their options when the time comes to make a purchase decision.

Key Questions to Ask Before Purchasing

When evaluating a new ice resurfacer, facility managers should consider several operational factors:

1. What are the long-term operating costs?

While propane machines may cost less initially, electric machines can offer savings over time through reduced fuel and maintenance costs.

While electric machines typically have lower day-to-day operating costs, facilities should plan for at least one, and possibly two, battery replacements over the machine's life. Battery costs can vary and continue to evolve, making them an important consideration in long-term planning.

2. What are your facility's ventilation capabilities?

Facilities with limited ventilation may benefit significantly from electric machines due to improved air quality.

3. How busy is your ice schedule?

Facilities with high-volume ice usage should evaluate battery charging schedules and operational cycles carefully.

4. Are there sustainability or emissions targets?

Many municipalities and organizations are adopting climate goals that favour electric equipment.

5. What funding opportunities exist?

Some government programs and municipal sustainability initiatives offer funding support for electric equipment purchases.

Factor	Electric Ice Resurfacer	Propane Ice Resurfacer
Upfront Purchase Cost	Higher initial purchase price (often 35–50% more than propane models).	Lower upfront purchase cost, making them more accessible for facilities with limited capital budgets.
Operating Costs	Typically lower lifetime operating costs due to reduced fuel use and simpler mechanical systems.	Higher ongoing costs due to fuel consumption and more engine-related maintenance.
Fuel / Energy Source	Battery-powered; recharged between resurfacings.	Uses liquid propane fuel tanks that must be replaced or refilled regularly.
Indoor Air Quality	Zero on-ice emissions. Eliminates carbon monoxide (CO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) inside the arena.	Produces combustion emissions that can impact indoor air quality if ventilation is insufficient. Produces combustion emissions; however, properly maintained propane machines today produce very low emissions. Adequate ventilation and air monitoring are still required.
Health & Safety	Safer indoor environment with no exhaust fumes.	Requires careful ventilation and air monitoring due to emissions.
Maintenance	Fewer moving parts and generally lower maintenance requirements.	Internal combustion engine requires regular servicing, fuel systems, and exhaust maintenance.
Noise Level	Much quieter operation.	Louder engine noise during operation.
Run Time	Modern batteries provide approximately 5–8 hours of operation, with charging typically done between floods, though periodic 1–2 hour charges are required.	Continuous operation as long as propane is available; quick tank replacement allows uninterrupted use, which can be beneficial during high-demand periods such as ice installation. During high-demand periods such as seasonal ice installation, propane machines may offer an operational advantage as they do not require charging between floods.
Charging / Infrastructure Needs	Requires charging station and electrical capacity in the building.	Requires propane storage and handling procedures but no charging infrastructure.
Environmental Impact	Zero direct greenhouse gas emissions during operation.	Produces greenhouse gases and combustion pollutants.
Typical Industry Use	Increasingly common in new or renovated facilities focusing on sustainability.	Historically the most common power source in North American arenas.
Resale / Trade-In Value	Value can be impacted by battery age. Machines with newer batteries retain stronger value, while units with batteries 5+ years old may see reduced trade-in value.	Typically maintains stronger trade-in value over time, particularly when compared to electric units with older batteries.

The Bottom Line

There is no universal answer to the propane vs electric debate. Both technologies are widely used in arenas across Canada and can produce excellent ice when properly maintained and operated.

For some facilities, propane machines remain the preferred option because of their lower upfront cost, familiar technology, and ability to operate continuously without charging. For others, electric resurfacers offer advantages related to air quality, noise levels, and long-term operating considerations.

Ultimately, the right choice depends on a number of factors including facility infrastructure, capital budgets, operating costs, environmental priorities, and the experience and comfort level of the operators using the equipment.

The goal of this overview is simply to highlight the functional differences between propane and electric resurfacing technologies so facility operators can ask the right questions and make informed decisions that best suit their facility.

Advances in both technologies, including improved battery performance and reduced-emission propane engines, mean that both options continue to evolve and remain viable in today's facilities.

Because at the end of the day, no matter what machine is used, the objective remains the same: great ice and a safe environment for everyone who uses the facility.

Operator Tip

No matter which machine you choose, **maintenance and operator training remain** critical to producing high-quality ice.

Regular blade sharpening, proper water temperature management, and consistent resurfacing procedures will have just as much impact on ice quality as the type of machine used.



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Kraft Hockeyville A Campaign Crash Course for Nova Scotia Arenas

Contributed by Kaden Medve-Racine, Marketing & Communications Coordinator

Kraft Hockeyville has been taking hockey rinks across Canada by storm ever since its inception back in the 2000s. Each and every year, facilities and municipalities from coast to coast have entered themselves into the competition in the hopes of being the next community to earn the life-changing first-place prize.

Through its years, we have seen Kraft Hockeyville find its way to Nova Scotia only twice. Salmon River, Nova Scotia and Deuville's Rink won the inaugural season of Hockeyville, using the \$50,000 prize on infrastructure upgrades. Fast forward all the way to 2022, where Sydney, NS and the formerly-named Canada Games Complex took home the grand prize of \$250,000. At the time, the facility had not been used for hockey in more than two years, as the CBU Capers did not have a hockey team. The city, along with funds raised by supporters in the community, decided to completely revamp the Canada Games Complex into a permanent home for local women's hockey associations—the first facility in Canada to be fully dedicated to women's hockey—recently renamed the Kehoe Forum.



Sydney's victory showed that winning Kraft Hockeyville is about far more than prize money—it is about elevating a community and the people who call it home. By becoming a national leader in supporting women's hockey, CBU turned a funding opportunity into a lasting legacy. Facilities across Nova Scotia have that same potential—not just to improve their buildings, but to become true game-changers within their communities.

The Nomination Process

At its core, the nomination process for Kraft Hockeyville is simple—on behalf of your facility, you are to submit a nomination story, submit rally photos, and add rally notes to your arena's submission. These requirements are straightforward enough, but most nominations fail before they even start, by not understanding that **individual community members are the ones contributing to a facility's nomination**. While it is often an executive within the facility who uploads the original story submission (and thus has now officially nominated their area), the nomination in question will have little to no impact if members of your community—or simply others within your facility—do not continue to submit rally material to your Arena Rally Page on the Kraft Hockeyville website.

What a Winning Community Must Understand

The most important thing to understand when going through the nomination process is that winning communities treat Hockeyville like a campaign, not simply a submission. Within this campaign mindset, several bottom-line factors must be agreed upon:

- It takes months of preparation to run a successful Hockeyville campaign

- The entire community needs to be mobilized
- Visibility and push marketing matter as much as your story
- Momentum during the nomination period is critical

Due to these factors, communities along with their respective facilities should be entering Hockeyville season with a multi-faceted operational approach in order to give themselves the best chance at being selected as a provincial winner.

Your Facility's Hockeyville Campaign

While a Hockeyville campaign will look different from town-to-town, and the community mobilization initiatives will be unique to your region, two bottom-line factors consistently generate the widest reach. Any community hoping to compete in Hockeyville on a national level must take advantage of both:

Consistent Social Media Engagement:

Social media has quickly become the engine that drives a successful Hockeyville campaign. Platforms such as Facebook and Instagram allow communities to rally support quickly and keep momentum alive throughout the nomination and voting process.

Successful campaigns posts regularly share and repost rally content (photos, stories, notes), highlight the history and heart of their facility, and consistently remind supporters to contribute rally points. Local teams, organizations, schools, and businesses can all help to amplify the campaign by sharing your campaign content with their own audiences.

The most important aspect of your Hockeyville social media campaign is consistent activity - not a one-time announcement. Posts should appear daily, stories shared constantly, and supporters continuously encouraged to participate by submitting their own photos, notes, and personal connections to the rink. Over time and throughout the nomination period, this consistent activity will create a wave of visibility that extends beyond your town.

A current example of a community successfully leveraging consistent social media engagement is the Ivor Macdonald Memorial Arena in Thorburn, Nova Scotia. Represented by *District 13 Recreation & Planning Commission* on Facebook, the community has demonstrated exemplary online public engagement through consistent campaign communication. By explaining the rules and requirements of Hockeyville, providing rally point updates, and continuously pushing for more community involvement, the Ivor Macdonald Memorial Arena has represented Nova Scotia proudly through the nomination period.



Top Tips from Ivor Macdonald Memorial Arena and the Community of Thorburn Nova Scotia's 2026 Winner

Plan Early:

We begin our campaign months in advance - scheduling rallies, help nights, and community events to support participation. Advanced planning helps maintain momentum and keeps the community engaged throughout the campaign.

Leverage Social Media:

Frequent posts, contests, and shared photos make it easier for everyone to contribute and maximize points. Social media keeps the campaign visible and motivates continued participation.

Engage the Community:

The rink has deep generational ties, and nostalgia drives involvement. Sharing memories and reconnecting with old friends brings people to events and inspires them to support the campaign.

Mobilize Volunteers:

Volunteers are essential for assisting with story submissions, organizing events, and maintaining energy throughout the campaign. Their dedication has kept the rink and community spirit thriving for decades.

Stand Out:

Create vivid, engaging stories that capture the rink's significance and involve multiple generations. Personal stories and active community participation will help smaller facilities compete with larger, more populated areas.

Submit Early:

Site traffic can overwhelm the system on the final day! Encourage participants to submit stories and photos early, and offer hands-on support to make sure everyone can contribute.

Boots-on-the-Ground Marketing:

While digital engagement is critical and should be treated as a non-negotiable, the strongest Hockeyville campaigns are powered by real-world community involvement. Winning communities host rally-events, community skates, alumni games, and local gatherings designed to bring people together under the context of rallying the community in support of their campaigns.

These grassroots efforts can help turn your Hockeyville nomination into a true community movement, something that is larger than just a facility or a nomination story. When members of your community feel personally connected to your campaign, rally participation grows rapidly and the story of your campaign begins to resonate far beyond your local demographic.



Conclusion

Nova Scotia has proven in the past that its communities have what it takes to gain national credibility during the Kraft Hockeyville season. From Salmon River's victory in the competition's inaugural year and Sydney's transformative win in 2022 to all of the communities who have found themselves in the later stages of voting, Nova Scotia as a province has demonstrated the passion and pride that exists within our local communities.

For facilities considering a future Hockeyville campaign, the message is clear: dedication and community engagement are everything. The communities that rise to the top are those that start early, consistently build awareness, and ultimately gain the momentum to rally the entire town behind their home rink.

Hockey arenas have always been at the heart of communities across Nova Scotia, and with the right planning, collaboration, and commitment, your arena could be the next Hockeyville success story.

Once again drawing on the work of the Ivor MacDonald Memorial Arena and the community of Thorburn, NS, their campaign has gone the extra mile by organizing several Hockeyville rally events. From alumni games and competitive youth games to community activities and video marketing tactics, the community of Thorburn proved that all it takes is a dedicated group of facility workers, athletes, volunteers, and community members to make your facility stand-out during the Hockeyville nomination process.

IT'S RALLY TIME!!

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DURING THE RALLY WE WILL BE SHOOTING A COMMUNITY VIDEO TO HIGHLIGHT OUR HOCKEYVILLE SPIRIT – COME OUT, BRING YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS AND HELP US SHOW WHAT

OUR COMMUNITY IS ALL ABOUT!!



Calling all former East Pictou Rural High Blue Eagles and Thorburn Golden Hawks!!!



Alumni Hockey Games



We're excited to announce that on Saturday, February 21, as part of our 2026 Hockeyville Community Rally, we're hoping to bring together former Blue Eagles and Golden Hawks for special alumni hockey games. This is a great opportunity to reconnect with old teammates, relive memorable moments on the ice, and celebrate the spirit of our hockey community.



If you're interested in participating, please reach out by emailing district13rec@gmail.com. Let's make this event a celebration of friendship, teamwork, community and the good old days.



When these digital and grassroots efforts come together, a Hockeyville nomination transforms into something much larger than an annual application, it becomes a community-wide movement with the genuine potential to gain nation-wide traction.



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Scenes at Scotiabank Centre

Hosting the PWHL Takeover Tour in Halifax

Contributed by Kaden Medve-Racine, Marketing & Communications Coordinator

Located in downtown Halifax, Scotiabank Centre (SBC) is no stranger to hosting high profile events. Along with being the host of the Halifax Mooseheads of the QMJHL, the Halifax Thunderbirds of the NLL, and the most prominent concerts to hit Atlantic Canada, SBC has extensive experience in hosting women's sports. From the 2004 IIHF Women's Worlds and the 2025 Rivalry Series to the annual Scotiabank Girls Hockey Fest, SBC has become a champion for the presentation of women's hockey in Atlantic Canada.

Being selected to host the first stop of the PWHL Takeover and the first Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL) game in Atlantic Canada further proved this, and SBC took the opportunity to go above and beyond to make the two games an unforgettable experience.

"As someone who regularly works sporting events at Scotiabank Centre, the PWHL Takeover Tour felt different - the crowds were engaged throughout the entirety of each game and you could tell that they truly wanted to be there and support the athletes, especially those who were playing professionally in their home province for the first time. Everything about the event felt meaningful, and there was a sense of hope and energy in the air"

—Floor Manager, Halifax, PWHL Takeover Tour

Additional weight surrounding the Takeover Tour stemmed from the strong Nova Scotian presence within the league. Several players and coaches celebrated homecoming visits to Halifax, creating the opportunity for local fans to witness familiar names perform at the professional level in front of a home crowd, helping to amplify the emotional weight of the event for those involved.

Among the returnees were:

Blayne Turnbull, Toronto Sceptres (Stellarton)

Jill Saulnier, Boston Fleet (Halifax)

Troy Ryan, Head Coach, Toronto Sceptres (Spryfield)

Kori Cheverie, Head Coach, Montreal Victorie (New Glasgow)

Allie Munroe, Toronto Sceptres (Yarmouth)

It is clear that Scotiabank arena is the most prominent facility in Atlantic Canada with respect to size, capacity, and location. However, these aspects of a facility are not always controllable, as facilities across the province face natural barriers and limitations in the scale of events that can be hosted. What does remain universally controllable for facilities across Nova Scotia is the power of the East Coast community and the importance of leveraging your contacts and relationships as a facility in order to increase reach, enhance patron experience, and provide professional-level hospitality to the athletes and organizations involved.



Above and Beyond

How SBC Enhanced the Community Experience

- Working with the PWHL to deliver free open practices at SBC, including autograph sessions with players.
- Working with the *Halifax International Airport Authority* to organize the welcoming of the PWHL teams upon arrival to Nova Scotia by local youth girls hockey teams.
- Community Clinic at SBC with a U-18 Women's hockey team.
- Post-game autograph session for local youth players and underrepresented groups.
- Coaches panel with the Montreal Victoire and Toronto Sceptres coaching staff for local coaches, held at the Halifax Convention Centre.
- Exclusive experiences with the Mi'k'aw Native Friendship Centre's youth sport program members.
- Pre-game welcome tunnels for fans to cheer for the teams and players upon arrival to the facility.



Photo Credit to James Bennett

Photo Credit to James Bennett



Photo Credit to James Bennett

Photo Credit to James Bennett

Knowing that the PWHL as an organization is committed to community engagement, SBC and Events East management ensured to mirror this commitment with some unique fan engagement initiatives. Thanks to the support of Hockey Nova Scotia, each engagement event hinged on collaborative partnerships and direct consultation with various actors within the HRM.

"It meant so much to me. It was more than just work, it was about being a part of something much bigger. Women's sports are evolving so much and getting to be a part of bringing something special to the East Coast is something I will carry with me throughout my career"

—Floor Manager, Halifax, PWHL Takeover Tour

The excitement translated into strong attendance on both nights, with crowds nearing full capacity - creating an atmosphere that reflected both the significance of the event and the growing appetite for women's professional hockey. For Scotiabank Centre, the turnout offered a clear signal that the demand for women's sport is fully established - and only growing larger.

The momentum surrounding women's sport at Scotiabank Centre is expected to continue in the years ahead, as the venue is already preparing to host major national women's championships, including upcoming U SPORTS events that will once again bring elite athletes and fans to Halifax. Together, these opportunities reinforce the facility's growing role as a stage for women's sport at the highest level.

"Hosting professional women's sport enriches the community of sport in the Atlantic region by helping young girls and women realize the opportunity to play competitively and professionally and continue to shape the future of sport"

— Corporate Communications Advisor,
Events East Group

"We were so happy to see so many girls, young women, and families in attendance, who were collectively sharing their enthusiasm and excitement for the women's game."

— Corporate Communications Advisor,
Events East Group

Hosting the PWHL Takeover Tour demonstrated that facilities are much more than simply the infrastructure that hosts sporting events - They are active partners in its growth, visibility and experience. When venues invest in presentation, community engagement, and athlete experience, they are drivers in defining the credibility and sustainability of professional events. For Scotiabank Centre - and for facilities across Nova Scotia - the message is clear: Preparation and partnerships matter as much as capacity.



Photo Credit to James Bennett

"Collaboration is an important part of any successful event for building community interest and engagement. By working with our partners, we collaboratively build excitement for major events and continue to build on Atlantic Canada's reputation as an amazing event destination"

— Corporate Communications Advisor,
Events East Group



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Inside the Oulton-Stanish Centre

A New Chapter for Dalhousie Recreation

Contributed by Kaden Medve-Racine, Marketing & Communications Coordinator

Since the closure of Dalhousie University's on-campus hockey arena in 2012, all hockey programming has had to take place off-campus, and thus, has suffered accordingly. When the Oulton-Stanish Centre - a brand-new, multi-purpose, on-campus facility broke ground in 2023, the return of hockey to Dalhousie's campus felt real.

Now upon its opening in March of 2026, the new rink will provide a permanent home for Dalhousie's men's and women's varsity hockey teams, along with broader campus recreation programming, intramurals, a physiotherapy clinic, and public use.



Together, these elements position the Oulton-Stanish Centre as far more than just a varsity arena. The facility represents a renewed commitment by Dalhousie University to strengthen campus recreation, support student wellness, and bring the energy of hockey back to the heart of university life.

With the arena structure complete and refrigeration systems in place, attention quickly turned to the most important element of the facility - the ice surface itself. RFANS was honoured to be recruited to lead the installation of the inaugural sheet of ice at the Oulton-Stanish Centre, working alongside facility operators and Dalhousie Athletic staff to guide the process from start to finish.

Led by Bud Macinnis, RFANS' technical director, the installation took place over two days, going from a bare concrete floor to a fully flooded, painted, and sealed sheet of ice. Throughout the process, RFANS worked closely with arena operators, providing hands-on instruction and best practices for ice-installation and long-term maintenance.



By the time the final layers were set, the transformation was complete. What has once been an empty arena floor had become a beautiful ice-surface, ready to welcome athletes, students, and the broader Dalhousie community. As the Oulton-Stanish Centre opens its doors, the finished rink stands as both the centerpiece of the facility and a symbol of hockey's long-awaited return to campus.





Why Host RFANS Ice Installation Training?

- ✓ Professionally installed sheet of ice
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Host facilities may also invite operators from other arenas to participate in the training.

Build the Ice. Build the Skills. Build Local Expertise.

RFANS Ice Installation Training Program

The Recreation Facilities Association of Nova Scotia (RFANS) offers hands-on **Ice Installation Training Packages** designed to help arenas install their ice surface while building the skills and confidence of facility staff.

Our program combines **classroom instruction and practical, on-ice training**, allowing operators to learn proper installation techniques while completing their seasonal ice install.

Whether your team needs **full training or hands-on installation support**, RFANS provides practical guidance and proven best practices used across the recreation facilities sector.

Training Options

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- Floor preparation and white coat application
- Line, circle, and logo installation, layer building

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- Floor sealing and preparation
- Line, circle, and logo installation, layer building

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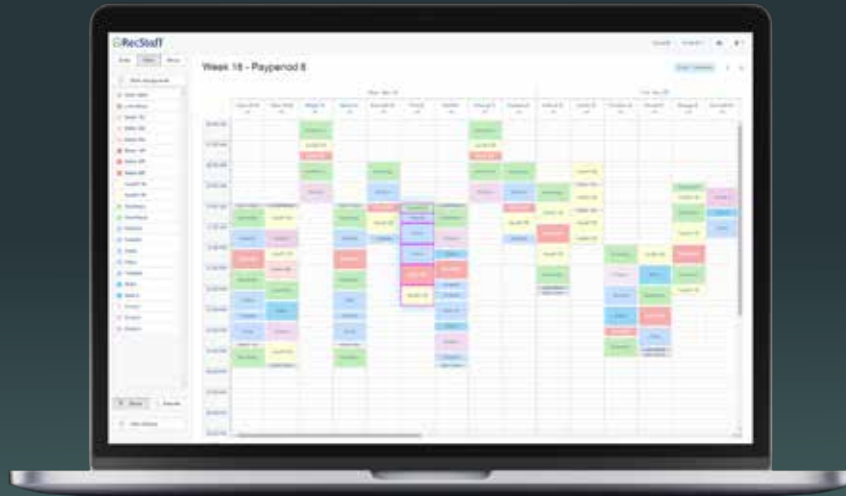
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SPEAK UP

NS SPORT & RECREATION ANTI-RACISM

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ANTI-RACISM DECLARATION

Here we stand up against racism and discrimination and support fair play for all.

Ici nous rejetons le racisme et la discrimination et nous supportons le "fair-play" pour tous.

Tett wetqotasik maskite'lkaqn aq penoqwite'lkemk,
aq awnaqa k'paqma'tuek aq neps~tkwenmek
papuaqn w'jit ms~t wen.

"Change happens when we make a conscious effort to make things better. Creating an Anti-Racism Declaration for recreation facilities aims to build a culture that does not tolerate racism and discrimination and takes action to change stereotypical beliefs and behaviours."

The NS Sport and Recreation Anti-Racism Week provided a safe platform for sharing lived experiences and educated those toward unlearning racist behaviours. It stemmed from acknowledging that our country has a legacy of racism and discrimination entrenched in our systems, institutions, beliefs, and behaviours.

During the province's first NS Sport and Recreation Anti-Racism Week, held November 14-18, 2023, RFANS declared its support towards anti-racism and discrimination in recreation facilities by launching a declaration in the form of a decal to recreation facilities and by signing Recreation NS's Anti-Racism Charter for Recreation.

RFANS encouraged sports teams to read or play the declaration through the audio system before competitive play and to display the decal in a visible area, such as a wall or on the glass in a penalty box.

"We can create change by taking action. We encourage all recreation facilities to participate."

RFANS had the pleasure of joining the Kings Mutual Century Centre for their anti-racism week event by doing a puck drop before their game as they committed themselves to eliminate racism and discrimination in their facilities. We look forward to seeing how you and others who have supported the declaration inspire others to do the same.

We encourage the continued support and participation of facilities managers/operators to forward this initiative.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE:

This facility is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment for all of those involved.

This facility will not tolerate any forms of racism and/or discrimination.

Should there be any incident perceived as racism, or discrimination, it will be dealt with immediately.

Please report any incidents of racism and/or discrimination to facility staff, security, or persons renting facility.



ANTI-RACISM POLICY AND PROTOCOL TOOL

Developed by the Tripartite Forum as a resource to help sport and recreation facilities deal with incidents of racism and/or discrimination within facilities. The tripartite forum and RFANS partnered to promote this initiative.

This tool consists of a policy template, Incident Report Forms and facility signage. Signage is **FREE** and can be placed within your facility to indicate you have a policy and are a safe, respectful environment that does not tolerate racism and/or discrimination.

For more info: 902-425-5450 ext. 330

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ATHLETIC FIELD CONSTRUCTION MANUAL

A detailed reference on uniform grass athletic field construction. It specifies root zone material, drainage, irrigation, and lighting requirements. The guidebook classifies athletic fields (1-5) to help choose construction methods and materials. The booklet includes permitting hours and maintenance fees for different field types, a checklist for evaluating field conditions, and more than 20 diagrams showing permitted field dimensions for turf-surfaced field sports. Turf managers building or renovating sporting fields need this guidebook for precise standards and specifications.

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CREATING SUSTAINABLE SPORTS FIELDS

Smart Practices for Healthier Turfgrass and Safer Play

Sports fields are some of the most heavily used green spaces in any community. From youth soccer games to school tournaments and recreational leagues, these fields must handle constant traffic while remaining safe and playable.

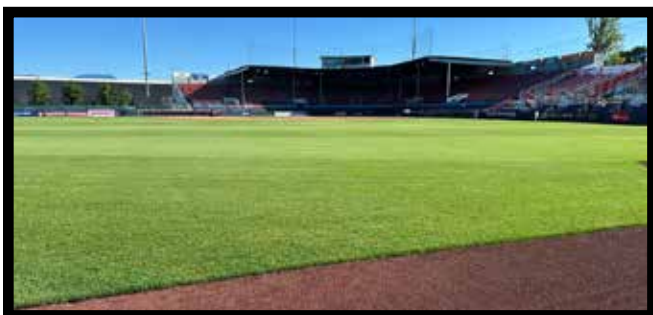
Sustainable sports field management focuses on maintaining healthy turfgrass while using resources efficiently. Through consistent maintenance and thoughtful management practices, field managers can improve turfgrass quality, reduce environmental impacts, and extend the lifespan of athletic surfaces.

The Foundations of Healthy Sports Fields

Maintaining a sports field is about more than just cutting the grass. Healthy turfgrass depends on several key practices working together:

- Mowing
- Fertilizing
- Aerating
- Overseeding
- Managing weeds, diseases, and insects
- Irrigation

When these practices are performed regularly, turfgrass becomes denser and stronger, allowing it to recover more quickly from heavy use.



Challenges

Sports field managers often work within real limitations. Fields may see heavy wear, long hours of play, limited budgets, and pressure from users who expect high-quality playing surfaces. Staffing levels and equipment availability can also affect what maintenance practices are possible.

Because of this, sustainable field management often means prioritizing the areas that receive the most wear, such as goal mouths, sidelines, and the center of the field.

Mowing: The Most Important Routine Task

Mowing is the most frequent maintenance activity on sports fields and plays a major role in turf health and safety.

A key rule is to never remove more than one-third of the grass blade at a time, which helps prevent plant stress and keeps turfgrass dense. Rotary mowers are commonly used on sports fields because they work well with the typical height of cut required for athletic surfaces.

Mowing frequency changes throughout the season. Grass grows quickly in spring and fall, requiring more frequent mowing, while growth slows during the heat and stress of summer.

Regular equipment maintenance is essential. Keeping mower blades sharp and following standard operating procedures ensures clean cuts and safe operation.

Fertilizing for Strong Grass

Fertilization supports healthy grass growth and helps turfgrass recover from wear. Nitrogen is the primary nutrient that drives growth and colour, while phosphorus and potassium help strengthen roots and improve plant resilience.

The best way to determine nutrient needs is through soil testing, typically done every two to three years. Testing helps field managers apply only the nutrients that are needed, reducing waste and environmental impact.

Fertilizers may be applied as either rapid-release products, which work quickly but require frequent applications, or slow-release products that feed the turfgrass gradually over time.



Aeration: Relieving Compacted Soil

Athletic fields frequently suffer from soil compaction due to heavy foot traffic and play during wet conditions. Compacted soil reduces oxygen in the root zone and limits water movement, which can weaken turfgrass.

Aeration helps solve this problem by removing small cores of soil and creating space for air, water, and roots to move more freely. This process improves soil health, strengthens root systems, and allows turfgrass to better withstand wear.

Aeration can also help control thatch and improve drainage. Many field managers combine aeration with overseeding to maximize turf recovery in worn areas.

Overseeding to Maintain Grass Density

Overseeding is the practice of planting new grass seed into an existing athletic surface. It is one of the most effective ways to maintain thick, resilient grass. While overseeding was traditionally done in the fall, many facilities now overseed in both spring and fall, especially if irrigation is available to support new growth.

Perennial ryegrass is commonly used because it germinates quickly and tolerates heavy traffic. Overseeding is typically focused on high-wear areas such as goal mouths, sidelines, and central playing zones. Targeting these sections—sometimes called a “field within a field” approach—helps maximize results while controlling costs.

Managing Weeds, Pests, and Disease

Weeds are often the most visible issue on sports fields. However, they usually appear only when turfgrass becomes thin and open soil is exposed. Maintaining dense, healthy grass is the best defense against weed invasion.

Insects such as white grubs can cause more serious damage by feeding on turf roots. Managing these pests requires understanding their life cycles and monitoring turf conditions carefully.

Diseases are less common on sports fields but can occur under certain environmental conditions. Many turfgrass diseases can be minimized through proper mowing, fertilization, and irrigation practices that reduce plant stress.

Modern turf management often follows Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles, which combine monitoring, cultural practices, and targeted control methods to manage pests effectively while minimizing chemical use.



Smart Irrigation Practices

Water is one of the most important factors in maintaining healthy turfgrass, although natural rainfall often determines how much irrigation is needed.

When irrigation systems are available, the goal is to water deeply but infrequently. This encourages roots to grow deeper into the soil, creating stronger turfgrass that is better able to tolerate drought and heavy use.

Using soil moisture as a guide—and adjusting watering based on weather conditions—helps conserve water while keeping fields healthy.



Growing Sustainable Fields for the Future

Sustainable sports field management is built on consistency. When mowing, aeration, fertilization, overseeding, and irrigation are performed regularly, turfgrass becomes stronger and more resilient. Healthy grass fills open spaces, reduces weed pressure, and creates safer playing surfaces for athletes.

Our goal is simple: grow strong turfgrass, prevent bare areas, and allow the field itself to do the work of staying healthy.



For the standards for each of these practices, please visit us at www.sportsturfcanada.com

About the Canadian Sports Fields Association / Sports Turf Canada

Canadian Sports Fields Association (rebranding from Sports Turf Canada) is the authority in our field, through our education programs as well as through our professional partnerships.

We provide those who maintain sports fields with current, credible and relevant information and education to help them manage their field assets in the most safe and effective manner. With a nationwide presence and a diverse membership representing various sports and industries, we're united by a common goal; to promote better, safer sports fields! We've been providing field management & maintenance education for over 38 years both on fields and in classrooms.



HEART N' HOCKEY INITIATIVE



To RFANS, General Managers and Staff:

I welcome this opportunity to thank each of you as I visited your facility sometime between November 3rd, 2025, and March 9th, 2026. My journey began at my home rink, the Colchester Legion Stadium in Truro. My last visit was to the Parrsboro Lions Recreation Centre in Parrsboro.

My name is John Guinan and I created the website heartnhockey.ca.

Since I began this endeavor, I have visited nearly 70 facilities throughout the province. From Cheticamp to Yarmouth and all points in between. Only a handful remain and I look forward to visiting those facilities in September.

I am delivering a very simple yet powerful message; how to increase the survivability rate of a cardiac event while playing hockey. My target market is any hockey player in Nova Scotia over 35 years of age. The target market is actually much larger. It is anybody over 35 years of age, anywhere, who plays hockey.

During my travels I have met many fine Nova Scotians all taking great pride in the facilities they manage. All were receptive to the message I was delivering. It begins and ends in the dressing room. The reasoning is simple; if a cardiac event occurs while playing hockey most likely it will be your teammates coming to your assistance. I encourage all general managers to display the decals I provided in every dressing room in their facility. That way the message is delivered every time somebody puts on a pair of skates, reaching the target market every time.

Many RFANS facilities have staff trained in the use of CPR and AEDs. They are a vital and necessary resource of those facilities. However, many facilities have limited staff and limited hours, and this emphasizes the importance of the message. Old timer / recreational hockey is often played after hours and at odd times when staff has gone home for the evening. So, you are on your own. Have a plan. That plan is the Three Pass Play. It is on those dressing room decals.

If you need more decals for your dressing rooms simply contact me at 902-890-4688. E-mail; heartnhockey@gmail.com website; heartnhockey.ca

If you have any issues or concerns with the AEDs in your facility, contact EHS-NS. Office number 902-407-3284. E-mail; EHSaED@ecmi.ca website; savelives.ca

Thank you for helping to deliver this potentially life-saving message.
John Guinan



The Middleton Arena: Richard, Chairman of the Board, John Guinan, Robert MacFadyen, General Manager, and Richard's boys.



Membertou Sport and Wellness Centre: John Guinan and Paul Carroll, General Manager.



Sackville Sports Stadium: Greg MacIsaac, General Manager, and John Guinan.



The Cabot Trail Arena, Cheticamp: John Guinan and Allan, staff.



Zatzman Sportsplex, Dartmouth: John Guinan and Scott Forward, General Manager.



Hector Arena, Pictou: Dave MacIntyre, General Manager and John Guinan.

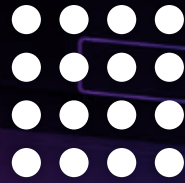


Parrsboro Lions Recreation Centre, Parrsboro: John Guinan could not resist. First time skating indoors since his sudden cardiac arrest.



Mariners Centre, Yarmouth: John Guinan and Dave Clayton, General Manager.





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HOCKEY NOVA SCOTIA CELEBRATES THE BEST IN THE GAME IN 2025-26



Contributed by Garreth MacDonald, Communications & Special Events Director, Hockey Nova Scotia

Each season, thousands of Nova Scotians help make hockey a positive and memorable experience for players across the province. From dedicated volunteers and inspiring coaches to hardworking officials and community leaders, the game is built on the passion and commitment of people who go above and beyond for the sport.

Hockey Nova Scotia is once again inviting nominations for our 2025–26 Annual Awards and Scholarships. This is an opportunity to recognize the outstanding individuals, teams, and organizations that help make the game the best it can be in our province.

These awards celebrate the many ways people contribute to hockey in Nova Scotia. Honourees include volunteers who dedicate countless hours behind the scenes, coaches who lead with respect and integrity, officials who help uphold the spirit of the game, and teams that achieve excellence on and off the ice. The awards also recognize associations and administrators who demonstrate leadership in developing the sport within their communities.

Hockey Nova Scotia is also proud to highlight two newer awards and scholarships that recognize trailblazers in the sport.

Introduced in 2025, the Erin Denny Award and Erin Denny Scholarship celebrate Indigenous players who demonstrate leadership, determination, and a commitment to their community and personal growth.

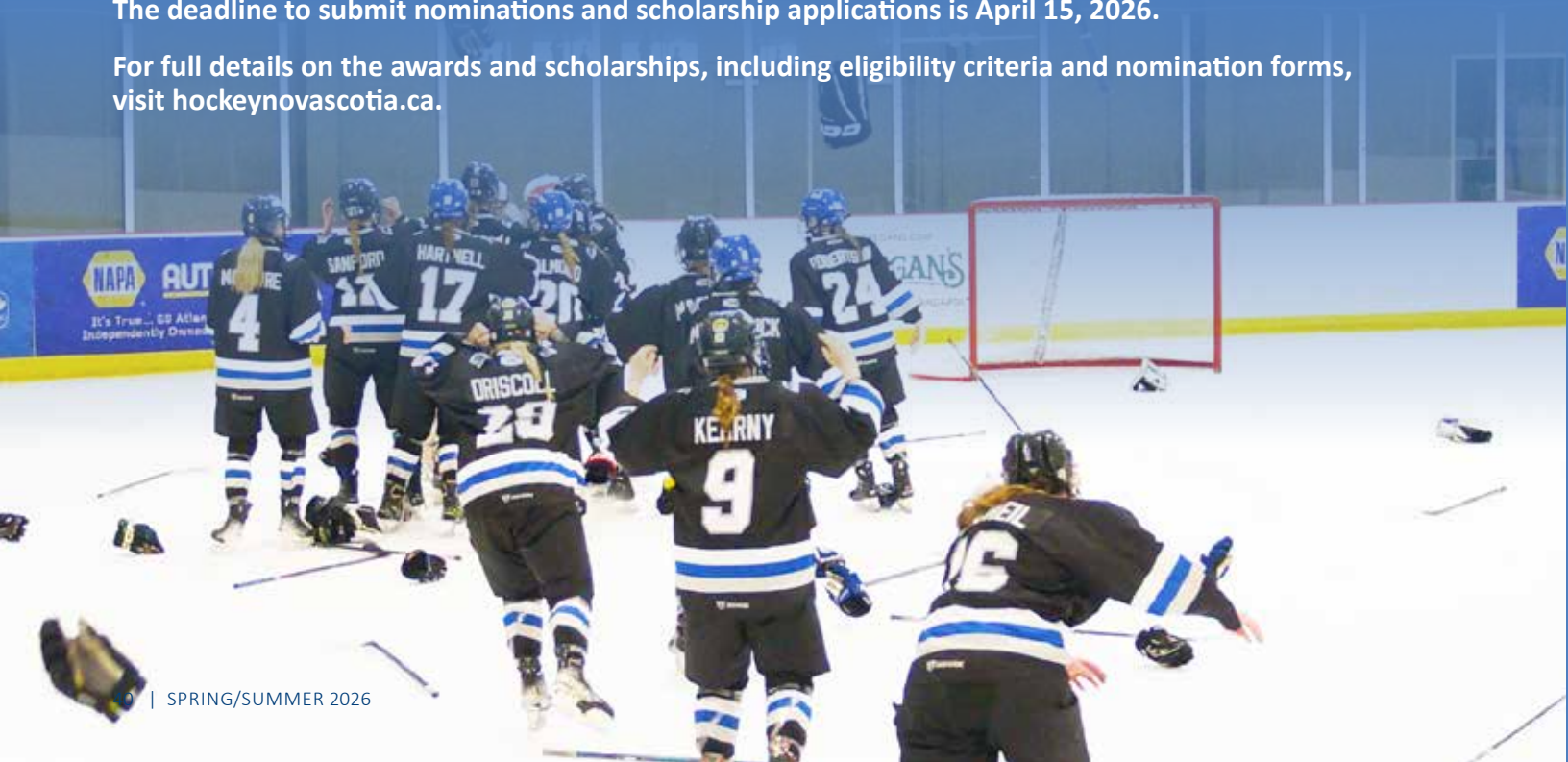
The Bill Riley Award and Bill Riley Scholarship, introduced in 2022, honour players of African Nova Scotian descent who embody the passion, resilience, and work ethic demonstrated by NHL trailblazer Bill Riley.

Members across the province are encouraged to take a moment to recognize someone who has made a difference in their hockey community. Often, the individuals who give the most to the game do so quietly and without recognition, making these nominations a special way to say thank you for their dedication.

Whether it is a volunteer who never misses a practice, a coach who inspires young players, an official who mentors the next generation, or a team that exemplifies sportsmanship and success, every nomination helps celebrate the people who make hockey the best it can be in Nova Scotia.

The deadline to submit nominations and scholarship applications is April 15, 2026.

For full details on the awards and scholarships, including eligibility criteria and nomination forms, visit hockeynovascotia.ca.



CSA HOCKEY HELMET PROGRAM



The CSA Hockey Helmet Program is such an important program that supports the province's strategy to promote physical activity, accessibility and inclusion in sport and recreation programming.

With the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage and our corporate partner Cleve's Source for Sports, RFANS is pleased to continue offering the CSA Hockey Helmet Program to eligible facilities (recreational arenas, municipal recreation departments, and schools). Affordable CSA-approved hockey helmets provide participants with the proper protective gear required to participate in school-sponsored and public skates, for new residents to Canada and for employee safety.

Eligible facilities can purchase CSA hockey helmets for \$10.00 each to a maximum of 20 helmets. Helmets with face shields are also available at \$24.00 per unit.

Applications are due each December, with helmets delivered in January—only one application per facility per year.

To order now visit:
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SINCE 2003

EHS **AED**

Emergency Health Services **AUTOMATED EXTERNAL
DEFIBRILLATOR REGISTRY**



NOVA SCOTIANS NEED YOU!

Did you know Nova Scotia has an AED registry coordinated by Emergency Health Services!

AED Registration is free and recommended throughout Nova Scotia. EHS will provide you with internationally recognized location posters and window decals.

REGISTERING YOUR AED MEANS:

- Being a heart-safe community leader in Nova Scotia by helping to save more lives from sudden cardiac arrest
- Keeping your AED up to date (if needed)
- Helping EHS place more AEDs in areas of need



WE'RE HERE TO HELP:

- Questions about your AED such as placement and accessibility?
- Wondering if the temperature/environment might compromise your AED?
- Need replacement pads following use in an emergency?
- Need automated email reminders for pad and battery expiries?
- Anything else? Let us know!

Register now at www.savelivesns.ca or request a PDF or print form!

PROGRAMS AND EDUCATION

AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) GRANT PROGRAM



Recreation Facility
Association
of Nova Scotia



Supporting you – from the ground up

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Through this grant program owners or managing partners of sport and recreation facilities can be eligible to receive up to 1/2 the total cost of the purchase of an AED or replacement batteries or pads for AEDs purchased through the program (taxes Included) to a maximum of \$1,500.00.

REQUIREMENTS

The following requirements must be met to access funds from the AED Grant Program:

- Applications and quotes must be submitted by February 15 of each year to secure any funding.
- Proof of purchase of an AED must be submitted by March 31 of the year to receive the funding.
- Be a member in good standing with the [Recreation Facility Association of Nova Scotia](http://www.savelivesns.ca) to receive up to half of the cost of the purchase of an AED. Non-members will receive up to one third the cost.
- Must provide annual training of staff in the use of the equipment with initial training to take place within 3 months of receiving the AED unit. The goal is to train all staff and require at least one AED trained staff person to be present when the facility is opened.
- The AED must be registered on the EHS AED Registry and it must be made available for public use. www.savelivesns.ca
- Must maintain unit according to manufacturer specifications and document maintenance schedule.

AEDs; HELPING TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC

Sudden cardiac arrest can happen to anyone, anywhere, at any time. Making defibrillators easily accessible is essential to increase survivors across Nova Scotia. According to Heart & Stroke, tens of thousands of Canadian lives are lost each year due to sudden cardiac arrest.

Sudden cardiac arrest is an “electrical problem” in the heart. The heart beats erratically and ineffectively and cannot pump blood through the body to keep vital organs alive. Most cardiac arrests occur outside of the hospital. Recognizing this emergency, calling 911, performing CPR, and using an automated external defibrillator (AED) as soon as possible will drastically increase someone’s chance of survival. In fact, with each passing minute without the use of an AED, the chance of survival declines by 7 to 10 percent.

An automated external defibrillator (AED) is a portable computerized medical device that analyzes and identifies shockable heart rhythms, advises the rescuer of the need for defibrillation, and delivers a shock if needed to restore a regular heart rhythm. An AED is easy and safe to use; using voice and visual prompts and only delivering a shock if it is needed.

With the placement of AEDs throughout Nova Scotia sport and recreation facilities, valuable time, and potentially lives, will be saved in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest emergency.

Source: Nova Scotia Emergency Health Services
www.savelivesns.ca

PROGRAM PARTNERS



Aquatic Facilities

Why State of Good Repair Audits Matter for Aging Aquatic Facilities

Contributed by Tim Hamel – Principal, Aquatics Associates

As aquatic facilities across Canada continue to age, the need for regular State of Good Repair (SOGR) Audits has never been more important. These audits provide owners and operators with a clear snapshot of the facility's condition at a specific point in time. A well executed SOGR Audit identifies code violations, short term repair needs, and long term capital requirements—along with recommended timelines and budget estimates for each item.

In the early decades of a facility's life, operators can often rely on routine preventive maintenance and reactive repairs. This approach works for a while, but it can also create a false sense of security: "Everything is running, so everything must be fine." Once a pool reaches the 30 year mark, that assumption becomes risky. At this stage, a SOGR Audit should be completed approximately

every five years to monitor emerging issues and plan for major lifecycle investments.

By the time most aquatic facilities reach 50 years of age, significant renovations are typically required. There are several levels of a State of Good Repair assessment. In the early years of a facility's life, audits can typically be completed every five years and are largely observational. As the facility ages, however, more intrusive testing may be required to properly assess structural and mechanical integrity. Depending on how the building and pool systems are holding up, significant repairs or major capital work may even be needed before the typical 50-year milestone. In fact, some aquatic facilities have required substantial upgrades shortly after reaching 30 years of age.



ELLIOT LAKE AQUATIC CENTRE RENOVATED POOL

ELLIOT LAKE AQUATIC CENTRE RENOVATION

This underscores the value of a strong audit program: it helps municipalities avoid unexpected capital shocks and unplanned programming downtime. A SOGR Audit also plays a critical role in long term decision making. When a facility reaches the end of its useful life, the audit provides the evidence needed to determine whether it is worth reinvesting for another 20–30 years, expanding to meet modern programming needs, or replacing the facility entirely.

This is especially relevant in Nova Scotia, where 33 of the province's 55 municipal indoor and outdoor pools were built between the 1950s and 1980s. Many of these facilities should already be well into a regular audit cycle—but the good news is that a SOGR Audit can be initiated at any time.

Does your facility currently have a State of Good Repair Audit in place, or is it time to begin one? A comprehensive audit can help determine whether the facility is nearing the end of its lifecycle, no longer meets programming needs, or requires significant upgrades. It also provides the insight needed to decide whether to reinvest, expand, or consider building a new facility.

Here are the key areas of a full Building State of Good Repair Audit should include.

- Architectural systems
- Building structure
- Roof systems
- Electrical systems
- Mechanical systems
- Pool(s) – tanks and circulation systems
- FF&E (furniture, fixtures and equipment)

These components can be evaluated individually or as a complete package, depending on the facility's needs and budget.

Protect your Facility's Future

Unexpected capital expenses and sudden closures can disrupt programming, impact revenue, and erode community trust. A proactive State of Good Repair Audit helps facility operators stay ahead of issues, plan responsibly, and make informed decisions about the future of their aquatic infrastructure.

If your facility is aging—or if you're unsure whether a SOGR program is already in place—now is the time to act. A comprehensive audit can determine whether your facility is still viable, whether it requires targeted upgrades, or whether it's time to consider expansion or replacement.

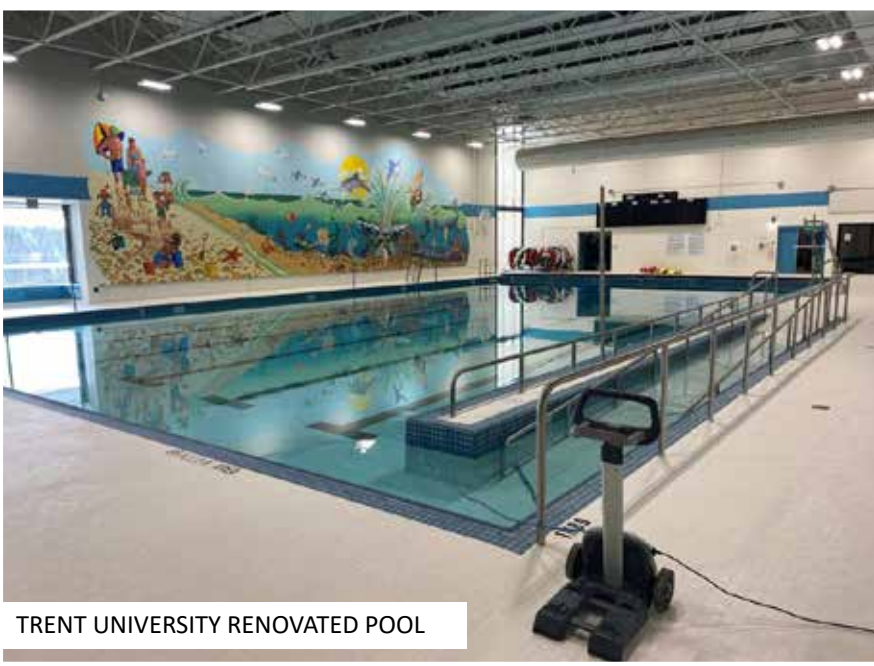
If you have a facility that may benefit from a State of Good Repair Audit, we can help. Reach out to learn more about the audit process and how it can support your long term planning.

Look forward to our Masterclasses on Aquatic Facility

- State of Good Repair Audits,
- Maintaining Good Air and Water Quality,
- Developing Feasibility Studies,
- and more.



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