



**Nova Scotia Provincial
Housing Agency**

Nova Scotia Wildfires Housing Support Program

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Contents

About the Program	3
About the Modular Units	3
Am I Eligible?	3
Additional Eligibility Criteria	3
How to Apply	5
What Happens Next?	6
Your Rent	6
How to Pay Your Rent	7
Uninsured	7
Insured.....	7
Tenant Insurance	7
Maintenance and Repairs	8
Modular Unit Inspections	8
Annual Inspections	8
Smoking	9
Pets	9
Moving Out	9
Damages	9
Contact Us	10

About the Program

The Province of Nova Scotia, through the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency (NSPHA), has established a transitional housing program for Nova Scotians who lost or experienced significant damage to their homes in the Shelburne County and Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) wildfires in Spring of 2023.

Delivered in partnership with the Red Cross, the Nova Scotia Wildfires Housing Support Program offers modular housing to eligible Nova Scotia residents for up to two years.

About the Modular Units

This program provides new, fully furnished, two- or three-bedroom modular units that include appliances and are more than 900 square feet.

The “turnkey” package includes transportation and limited site preparation for installation of the modular unit pad on the property of your primary residence.

Am I Eligible?

The Red Cross is the first point of contact for Nova Scotians who have lost or experienced significant damage to their homes in the wildfires and are seeking financial support and transitional housing.

To qualify, all applicants must contact the Red Cross to meet with them regarding personalized recovery supports. To contact the Red Cross, you can call 1-800-863-6582 or email NSRecovery@redcross.ca to book an appointment.

If you meet the eligibility requirements for the Housing Support Program, the Red Cross will provide you with an application form and submit a referral on your behalf to the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency.

Additional Eligibility Criteria

Site Requirements

Before a modular unit can be placed on the property of your primary residence, the site will need to be assessed to ensure it is suitable for placement of the modular unit.

Prior to the use of a fire damaged property for a modular unit, it is the responsibility of the property owner to confirm the suitability of the site. This includes confirming that a modular unit can be accommodated on the site (that it's large enough), it is accessible for the large truck that will transport the modular unit to the site and that impacts from the fire, such as well water or septic, have been mitigated so the site can be safely reoccupied.

Applicants with sites where critical infrastructure is not fully functional and that require demolition, rock hammering or blasting, additional fill or removal of fill, driveway widening, or excessive tree clearing are not eligible until the issues are resolved.

Should you be unable to confirm the suitability of your property, please contact the Red Cross to learn more about supports that are available to ready your site for placement of a modular unit.

After the wildfire, your land may be affected by smoke, soot and ash, chemicals and water damage, leading to concerns about the safety of drinking water, soil and air quality.

Each situation will be different, and in all cases individual properties will require their own assessment of risks to figure out which potential safety measures apply.

It is important to note that if you are seeking to place a modular unit on your own land, you are responsible for addressing potential concerns listed below:

- Cleanup of soils, soot, ash
- Physical hazards and barriers such as trees that prevent placement of the modular unit
- Potentially hazardous materials
- Air quality
- Water damage
- Fuel/oil leakage
- Damaged septic systems
- Well water impacts

If you are unsure of the potential concerns, please work with your insurance company to consult a qualified professional, such as a fire damage restoration company, to conduct an assessment.

If you are uninsured, the Red Cross will assist your household in navigating the requirements. If a need for support is identified in this area, the Red Cross may refer you to the Province to provide assistance.

Links to additional resources can be found here:

<https://novascotia.ca/alerts/docs/returning-home-after-wildfire-evacuation-impacted-properties.pdf>

Building Permit Requirement

All applicants seeking to place a modular unit on the property of their primary residence must obtain a building permit.

A copy of the building permit must be included in your application package along with all other supporting documentation identified in the 'How to Apply' section below.

It is a legal requirement for the property owner to obtain permits under the *Building Code Act*.

Applicants for building permits should self-identify as impacted by the wildfires, so that municipalities may place a rush on their application.

How to Apply

Application forms for the Housing Support Program are only available through the Red Cross.

Before applying, please work with your Red Cross Case Manager who will assess and refer eligible individuals and families to the program.

To qualify, all applicants must submit an application package to the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency– HousingWildfireResponse@novascotia.ca – that includes:

- ✓ A completed application form
- ✓ A referral form that is signed and dated by your Red Cross Case Manager
- ✓ The Premises Identification Number (PID), survey of the property or location certificate and proposed location of the modular unit on your property
- ✓ Confirmation of municipal permits/building code respecting the proposed placement of the modular unit on the property
- ✓ An overview of remediation undertaken on the property since the wildfires have occurred
- ✓ Confirmation of the property's suitability for water (e.g., well-water testing) and sewage system

- ✓ Confirmation of the property’s suitability for electrical/gas services
- ✓ A declaration form signed by the property owner stating that you have met the requirements for placement of the modular unit on the property of your primary residence

The NSPHA will contact you within approximately 5 business days of submitting your application if additional documentation is required prior to confirming your participation in the program.

What Happens Next?

Program participants will receive a letter confirming NSPHA’s offer of a modular unit.

Prior to moving in, you will be required to sign a lease agreement with the NSPHA.

A staff member will review the terms of the lease agreement with you and answer any questions you may have.

Lease terms will be month to month, which will provide you with the flexibility to vacate or request transport of the modular unit from your property with 30 days’ notice to the NSPHA.

Your Rent

Rental rates are based on Average Market Rental rates (AMR) established by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) for the area where the home will be located.

\$400/month will be deducted from these amounts to assist with water/sewer and electricity/heating bills which will be paid for by the resident.

Rental rates for clients in Shelburne Country are as follows:

All Nova Scotia (Shelburne County)	
2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom+
\$1,355	\$1,657

Rental rates for clients in Hammonds Plains are as follows:

Hammonds Plains	
2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom+
\$1,797	\$2,006

How to Pay Your Rent

Uninsured

If you are uninsured and/or are receiving financial support from the Red Cross for temporary accommodation costs, your rent is due on the first day of the month and will be paid directly by the Red Cross to the NSPHA.

Insured

If you have adequate insurance to cover shelter costs (commonly covered under your Additional Living Expenses allowance), you will make your rental payments directly to the NSPHA on the first day of the month in one of the following ways:

Payment Method	Details
Pre- Authorized Payment	<p>This is the easiest and most convenient way to pay your rent. For pre-authorized rent payment, your bank sends your rent payment from your bank account directly to NSPHA every month.</p> <p>You will need to fill out a Pre-Authorized Payment form and provide NSPHA a void cheque.</p>
Interac Direct Payment	Rent payments can be made using debit at any NSPHA office that is convenient for you. Payments are processed through your bank immediately.
Post-dated Cheques	You may provide NSPHA with posted-dated cheques for up to 1 year in advance. Cheques are cashed on the first business day of each month.
Phone or Online Banking Payment	You can pay your rent by phone or online banking. Please speak to someone at your financial institution on how to set this up. The NSPHA will provide you with a Tenant ID number to help set this up.
Interact E-Transfer	You may choose to pay your rent via e-transfer. If you wish to do so, please contact the NSPHA to obtain the email address to use when sending payment.

Tenant Insurance

Tenant insurance is the responsibility of the tenant.

For more information and rates, speak with an insurance agent or broker or visit the Insurance Bureau of Canada's website at ibc.ca.

Maintenance and Repairs

The NSPHA will be your landlord and maintenance provider.

It is your responsibility to keep your modular unit in good condition by contacting NSPHA's Maintenance team when repairs are needed.

Repair requests will be prioritized based on NSPHA's assessment of the issue. Response times are based on the type of maintenance and repairs required as follows:

- Emergency – response time of 1 hour or less
- Urgent – response time within 4 hours
- Standard – completion of request with 10 days

Failure to report a maintenance issue or damage to your unit that is beyond normal wear and tear will result in a tenant charge being applied to your account.

Please note that the following services *will not* be provided by the NSPHA:

- x Snow removal
- x Garbage removal
- x Lawn care

Modular Unit Inspections

24-Hour Notice of Entry

There may be times when NSPHA staff or contractors need to enter your modular unit. They may need to make repairs, inspect your unit or respond to an emergency.

Under the *Residential Tenancy Act*, the NSPHA must give you at least 24-hours written notice before entering your modular unit – except in the case of an emergency

Annual Inspections

Once a year the NSPHA will inspect your modular unit to make sure:

- ✓ Your smoke detector is in working order
- ✓ Window screens are undamaged and locks are in place and in working order

- ✓ Appliances are clean and in working order and there are no fire hazards

If damage to your modular unit is observed during our inspection, the NSPHA will notify you of tenant charges that will be applied to your account.

The Red Cross is not responsible for paying any tenant charges.

Smoking

Smoking is strictly prohibited in your modular unit. This applies to tenants, occupants and guests.

Failure to comply will result in tenant charges being applied to your tenant account.

Pets

The NSPHA recognizes that, in many households, pets are members of the family. The modular unit you are renting from the NSPHA is pet friendly.

If you have a pet, please ensure that you:

- × Never leave your pet unattended outside your unit
- × Never discard cat litter waste in the toilet
- ✓ Always scoop and bag your pet's waste and dispose of it properly

Damages to your modular unit made by pets may result in charges being applied to your tenant account.

Moving Out

Before moving out and seeking to have the modular unit removed from your land, you are responsible for:

- ✓ Giving your local NSPHA district office at least 30 days written notice (one full calendar month) before you plan to vacate your modular unit
- ✓ Enabling NSPHA staff to inspect the modular unit shortly after written notice is given

Tenants are expected to take reasonable care of their modular unit. The NSPHA will inspect the modular unit again after move-out.

Damages

Tenants are responsible for covering the cost of repairs caused by negligence or deliberate damage and for cleaning the unit if it is excessively dirty when they leave.

Examples of deliberate damage include, but are not limited to:

- × Holes in drywall
- × Broken cupboards
- × Damaged doors and windows
- × Inoperative appliances
- × Water damaged floors

These charges must be paid upon returning your unit keys to NSPHA.

Contact Us

If you have any questions or concerns about the Nova Scotia Wildfires Housing Support Program, please contact us via email at:

HousingWildfireResponse@novascotia.ca

NSPhA