

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF
ANTIGONISH

TOPIC:	Comfort and Reception Centre / Shelter Policy Emergency Evacuation Policy
POLICY NUMBER:	39
DATE APPROVED:	April 17, 2012 (#2012-34)
DATE REVISED:	

1.0 BACKGROUND:

In the days following Hurricane Juan in September 2003 and after the widespread power outage in November 2004, many communities came together in typical Nova Scotia fashion to assist individuals in their communities. Locations such as volunteer fire department that had generator power opened their doors to locals to offer a place for food, warm drink, and information. Once opened, these locations become known as “Comfort Stations”.

The Town and County of Antigonish continue to support communities in local efforts to increase resiliency to emergencies by providing some basic needs for residents during times of isolation and utility disruption such as may be experienced during weather-related events. Such support augments the 72 hour preparedness planning efforts suggested for all Nova Scotians. It includes assisting community groups in securing JEPP funding to enhance their facilities, and providing expertise in selecting sites and developing plans and procedures.

2.0 DEFINITIONS:

2.1 A “Comfort Centre” is opened by a community group and is intended to provide a location where community members can gather for a period of time during the day. A Comfort Centre is not opened with the intention of turning into an overnight shelter operation. Depending on the time of year and the emergency situation, a Comfort Centre can serve several purposes. Feeding/water, warmth and information are the three key services provided” (DCS-RC Memo April 2008).

2.2 “Reception Centres / Shelters”: In large-scale emergencies, these types of operations are opened and operated by the Red Cross, under the Department of Community Services, and include the provision of evacuees and personal services such as care of elderly, persons with disability, and can include psycho-social services. They are opened by the Red Cross at the request of a specific Municipality or first responder by contacting the Red Cross (DCS-RC Memo April 2009).

3.0 ISSUE:

With the evolution of Comfort Centres, some confusion has resulted as to the role of REMO in the activation of such centres. Also at issue are the parameters for the set-up of a comfort centre and the differences between comfort centres or shelters. With no real standardization across the province on the set up and maintenance of comfort centres this has led to some confusion amongst the general public as well.

In order to clarify any confusion, the following policy has been developed:

4.0 PROCEDURE FOR OPENING A COMFORT CENTRE

- 4.1 The decision to open a Comfort Centre is made by the community group in consultation with the Emergency Management Coordinator
- 4.2 In situations of widespread emergency or where REMO has been made aware of utility disruptions in a community, REMO may contact the Comfort Centre contact person to discuss the activation of a centre. This discussion may be initiated by the area Councillor if they have been made aware of problems through contact with community residents.
- 4.3 Once the decision has been made to open a comfort centre, the Emergency Management Coordinator will consult with the Red Cross and Department of Community Services. Once formally open and approved, costs that are **approved in advance** and associated with the operation of the centre will be assumed by DCS (DCS-RC Memo April 2008).
- 4.4 Comfort Centres are to be staffed with volunteers from within the community as prearranged by the community group responsible for the centre.
- 4.5 Once REMO is made aware of Comfort Centre activation, REMO will notify media sources to help publicize this service.
- 4.6 Comfort Centres are not intended for overnight shelter. If, during daytime operations, the Comfort Centre's volunteers identify a requirement for overnight shelter, such requests should be made to REMO, at which time arrangements will be made to provide overnight shelter.
- 4.7 If long term initiation of a Comfort Centre is required (more than 72 hour duration), or anticipated, REMO may be provide resources to the centre as requested.
- 4.8 The decision to de-activate a Comfort Centre will be made by the community group responsible for the Comfort Station. REMO will be notified of the intent to de-activate and will report the deactivation to the media sources.

5.0 PROCEDURE FOR OPENING A RECEPTION CENTRE / SHELTER:

- 5.1 The decision to open a Reception Centre / Shelter is made by the REMO through consultation with emergency services partners and first responders. In most cases, a Reception Centre / Shelter is opened when evacuation of a large number of residents is required or anticipated.
- 5.2 In consultation with Emergency Services Partners and first responders, REMO will determine the facility location for the Reception Centre / Shelter as guided by the Emergency Plan.
- 5.3 Once the decision to open a Reception Centre / Shelter has been made, the Department of Community Services and Red Cross will be contacted to initiate their response protocols. The set-up and operation of the Reception Centre / Shelter will be the responsibility of the Red Cross.
- 5.4 REMO will notify media sources of the Reception Centre / Shelter as appropriate.
- 5.5 The decision to de-activate a Reception Centre / Shelter will be made by REMO in consultation with Red Cross and other emergency services partners and first responders.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to support this policy the following steps are recommended:

- 6.1 Approval of the policy by the Advisory Committee
- 6.2 A copy of this document should be distributed to all Comfort Centre contact persons in each of the units with the information on how to contact the REMC upon activation.
- 6.3 Contact Lists of all Comfort Stations should be updated for each unit.
- 6.4 A copy of this document should be distributed to all Councillors in each unit.
- 6.5 Councillors should be distributed the contact name and number for Comfort Centre contact persons in their area.

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF

ANTIGONISH

EMERGENCY EVACUATION GUIDE



Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Organization

1.01 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Town and or County of Antigonish Emergency Evacuation Guide is to provide a vehicle through which a timely and effective evacuation and relocation of people can be achieved.

1.02 AUTHORITY

The Town and or County of Antigonish Emergency Evacuation Guide has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of and under the authority of the Regional Emergency Measures By-law, passed by the Municipality of the County of Antigonish and the Town of Antigonish. This guide is also in accordance with the provisions of the Province of Nova Scotia, Emergency Measures Act, 1990, c.8, s.1.

The guide will be known as the Town and or County of Antigonish Emergency Evacuation Guide, and part of the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Plan. It shall be the responsibility of the Regional Emergency Management Co-coordinator to ensure that the Guide remains current, through periodic updates and for the reproduction and distribution to all plan holders. This guide shall be brought forward at least once a year to the Regional Emergency Management Planning Committee for review and updating.

1.03 IMPLEMENTATION

This Emergency Evacuation Guide will be implemented when an emergency, evacuation and relocation will be necessary for residents within the Antigonish region. The type and size of the emergency, the perceived threat to the community and the number of people to be relocated, will determine if the guide is implemented in whole or in part.

1.04 CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The Emergency Evacuation Guide is based on a philosophy of evacuation and temporary relocation of residents within the boundaries of the Antigonish region. The Guide also establishes a mechanism through which control and co-ordination is established as well as ongoing service support throughout the evacuation and relocation process.

It is recognized and accepted that circumstances will dictate for example, the boundaries of the area to be evacuated, the direction of movement of residents and the location of evacuee centers. The time of day or night could have a bearing on the number of people to be evacuated from a given area. This is the result of a population shift from residential areas to places of work. Although procedures have been established, the widest possible latitude for decision making has been left to the decision makers.

Response officials will use all relevant information in determining areas to be evacuated, this may include:

- **population figures reflecting day/night occupancy**
- **description of areas to include natural and manmade barriers**
- **assembly areas**
- **main evacuation routes;**
- **potential hazards that may still exist in the area**
- **special care facilities**
- **approximate number of residents in area**
- **number of schools in area**
- **recreational facilities in the area**
- **Fire stations or other emergency facilities in the area.**

The area of the Town and or County of Antigonish to be evacuated will be considered an emergency site and an Emergency Incident commander will be appointed. As a result, some services and organizations such as Police, Social Services and Health may be directing and or supporting more than one emergency site. All services and organizations must be acutely aware of this fact and at the same time, of the need to supply at least a minimum level of service to the unaffected areas of the Town and or County. This can only be achieved through a high level of cooperation, coordination and dedication on the part of everyone concerned.

1.05 METHOD OF OPERATION

Should a major incident occur in the Town and or County of Antigonish, on the advice of the first response agency, the CAO and or Clerk, the Regional Emergency Management Coordinator, or any member of the Regional Unified Command Group may request that the Regional Emergency Management Plan be activated.

The Director of the Regional Emergency Coordinators Centre (RECC), along with the Regional Emergency Management Coordinator (REMC) and the Public Information Officer (PIO) will ensure that all members of the RECC and RUGG are alerted and report to the Emergency Coordinator Centre. If the need to evacuate and relocate residents of the affected area is apparent, the provisions of the Emergency Evacuation Guide will be implemented.

Should there be a need for a mandatory evacuation a “state of local emergency” must be declared. Initial evacuation may commence under the authority of the Fire Chief or his designate.

The exception to this is where an emergency site is under the management of a service other than police. In this instance, the Incident Commander has the responsibility for the evacuation of people within the danger area. i.e.: Schools, nursing homes and hospitals that have their own in-house evacuation plan. Police Services will assume responsibility for movement of these evacuees as soon as they have been moved

beyond the jurisdiction of the In-house Evacuation Coordinator. The Incident Commander will advise the ECC Incident Commander of any evacuation arrangements made. The ECC will ensure that coordination takes place through the police and other involved organizations.

Once the decision has been made to evacuate an area of the Town and or County, the lead Emergency Response Agency or the Emergency Coordinator Centre will determine the following:

- Early notification is imperative.

The boundaries of the area to be evacuated:

- **the main evacuation route(s) to be used and the necessary traffic control points**
- **the assembly or staging areas to be used**
- **notify Red Cross 1-800-222-9597**
- **the time evacuation will start and who will be evacuated first (staged evacuation)**
- **the medical care giving facilities, schools, university, recreation facilities etc. within the evacuation area and ensure they are notified if necessary**
- **that all services are alerted to the evacuation, including the provincial and regional EMO**
- **that a news release is prepared for immediate broadcast to the public;**
- **Appoint a police site manager to direct the evacuation and relocation.**

Schools located within the area to be evacuated will not send students home. School population will be evacuated to relocation centers and from there reunited with their families, as per their contingency plans. A parent(s) or guardian(s) who wishes to remove their child or children from school during an evacuation crisis may do so by making the request, in person, to school officials and following school board policy.

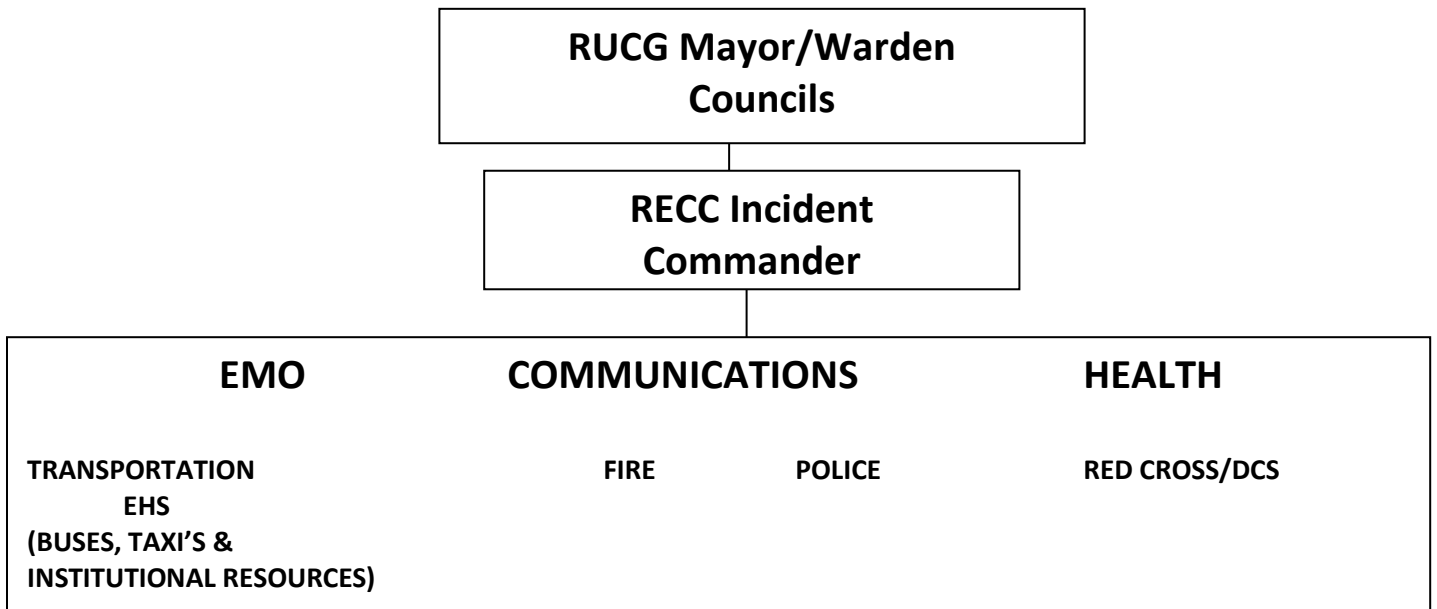
Designated essential services within the community and some industrial workers may have to remain on the job as the tasks they are performing cannot go unattended. These positions should be rotated as often as possible and will only be abandoned under imminent life threatening circumstances.

The residents of The Town and/or County of Antigonish who have been relocated in temporary shelter will require a wide range of support services. The Department of Community Services has the primary responsibility for the provision of all such services and has contracted these to the Canadian Red Cross.

1.06 LINES OF AUTHORITY

The organizational chart that follows (1.07) illustrates the lines of authority emanating from the Regional Unified Command Group through the CAO/Clerk and members of the ECC. The primary response services concerned with evacuation are the only services illustrated.

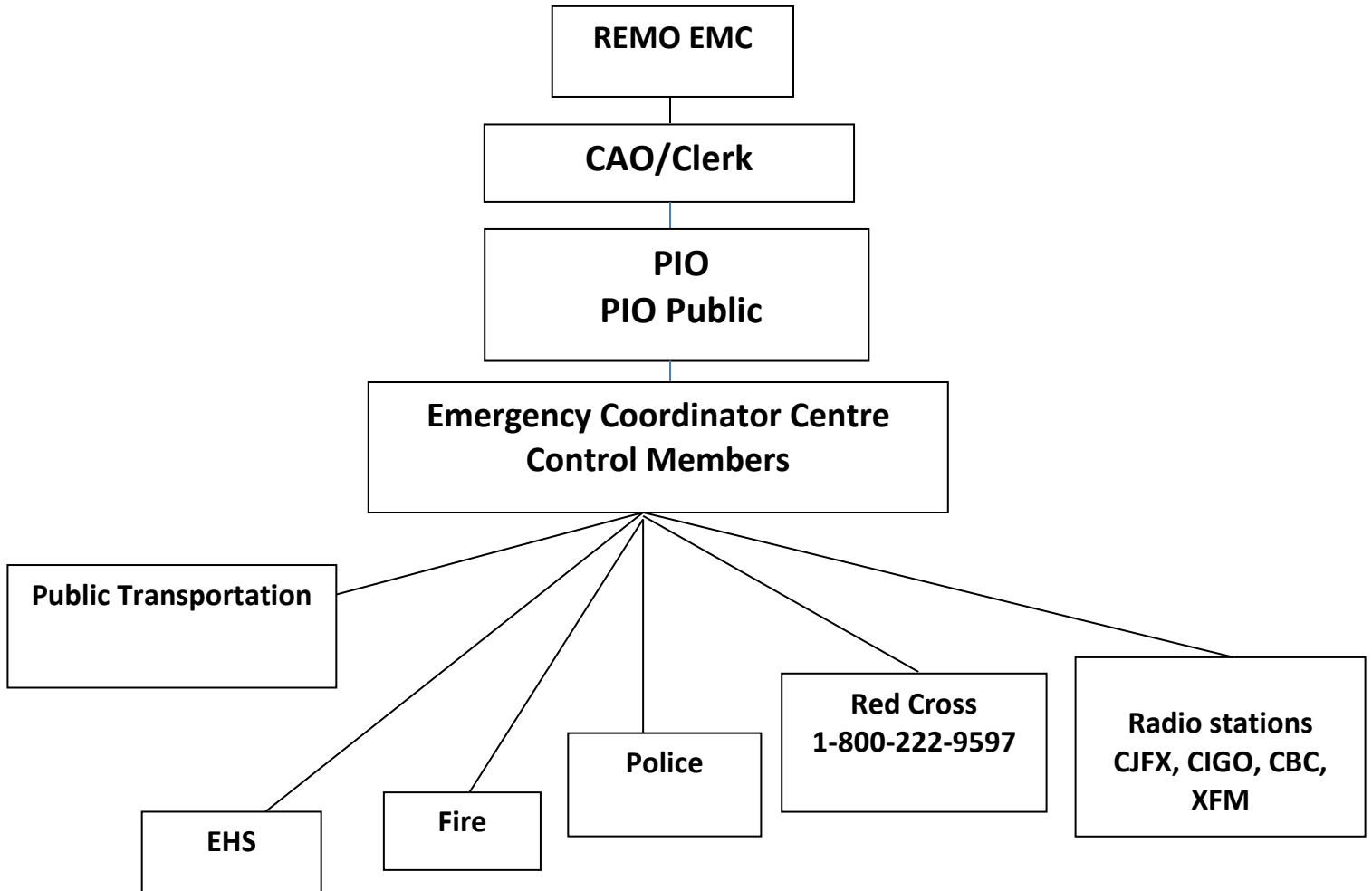
1.07 LINES OF AUTHORITY – ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
TOWN AND COUNTY OF ANTIGONISH



1.08 EMERGENCY ALERT

Should the ECC be activated to co-ordinate an evacuation then the Emergency Alerting System of the Regional Management Plan will apply.

1.09 EMERGENCY ALERT – ORGANIZATIONAL CHART EVACUATION



1.10 COMMUNICATIONS

The Antigonish Regional Management Communications Officer, will be responsible for establishing and maintaining communications to support evacuations and relocation. Any or all requests for communications hardware or coordination should go through the Communications Officer. The request for equipment will be acted upon after approval of the Emergency Coordinator Centre Control Group.

SECTION 2

2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities assigned to department and volunteer organizations are specific to this guide and may or may not mirror those assigned in the Antigonish Regional Emergency Management Plan. Those department and organizations not listed are still required to provide whatever assistance is required in support of emergency evacuation and relocation.

The Emergency Management Advisory Committee, on the advice of the ECC, is responsible for a state of declaration of a “state of emergency” prior to the implementation of this guide. All alternatives to evacuation should be explored by the ECC before recommending to the REMAC a state of local emergency.

2.01 Emergency Coordinator Centre – Control Group

When the decision has been taken to evacuate an area of the Town of Antigonish and a Declaration of a local state of emergency has been proclaimed, the Emergency Coordinator Centre (control group), under the direction of the CAO and or Clerk, will be responsible for the following:

- a) **Ensure that all support services are alerted to the evacuation order.**
- b) **Ensure that all necessary volunteer organizations have been alerted and their emergency plans activated.**
- c) **Appoint Incident Commander.**
- d) **Identify safe areas and have relocation centers opened for evacuees.**
- e) **Determine the time evacuation will commence and ensure that the Public Information Officer is informed and information is circulated.**
- f) **Notify any medical facilities of the evacuation order, those within the area to prepare to evacuate and those outside to prepare for the possibility of receiving evacuees.**
- g) **Compile a list of essential personnel who are within the evacuation area and who remain at their work site.**
- h) **Ensure that the Provincial and Regional EMO are notified of the evacuation order.**

2.02 POLICE

When a state of “local Emergency” is proclaimed and this guide is implemented, the RCMP will, in addition to any other emergency responsibilities assigned elsewhere, be responsible for the following:

- a) **Assume overall control of the evacuation and relocation under the direction of the CAO/Clerk except as noted in 1.05 (Fire Chief).**
- b) **Identify the main evacuation routes to be used.**
- c) **Determine where point duty officers will be needed and where barricades can be supplemented.**
- d) **Provide police personnel at assembly areas and relocation centers as required. Ensure relocation areas have Police presence.**
- e) **Provide security for evacuated areas and guard centres as required.**
- f) **Ensure animal control (dog catcher, SPCA, Dept. of Agriculture, etc.) is notified of the evacuation and they are prepared to care for or evacuate animals left behind in the evacuated area. (DART – Red Cross).**
- g) **Ensure Ground Search and Rescue are notified to provide personnel to assist police with their evacuation activities if required.**
- h) **Activate the Police Mutual Aid Plan if required.**
- i) **Notify the Provincial and Town Department of Transportation and Public Works to request assistance in road closures and re-routing of traffic.**

2.03 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

When notified that an evacuation order has been issued, the person responsible for public transportation will provide the following:

- a) **Provide for the immediate and ongoing transportation needs to move people from assembly areas to relocation centres.**
- b) **Provide specialized buses to aid in the evacuation of disabled, hospitals or like institutions.**
- c) **Direct and co-ordinate all public transportation.**
- d) **Activate the Transportation Mutual Aid Plan if required through Regional EMO.**
- e) **Continue if possible to provide service to other non-affected areas.**

2.04 RED CROSS /DCS

When notified that an evacuation order is in effect, the Department of Community Services in association with the Canadian Red Cross will be responsible for the following:

- a) **The provision for the evacuees of temporary shelter, feeding, clothing, personal services as necessary and a system of registration and inquiry, i.e. family reuniting. Reception and Information**
- b) **Emergency feeding of shelter workers and evacuees.**
- c) **Direct and co-ordinate the activities of all social care delivery agencies.**
- d) **Ensure that all relocation centres to be occupied have adequate operation staff available to receive evacuees.**
- e) **Ensure that the Community Services (Social Services) Mutual Aid Plan is activated.**

2.05 PUBLIC INFORMATION

When an evacuation order is in effect in the Town or County of Antigonish, REMO Public Information Officer will be responsible for the following:

Prepare a news release giving necessary information

- Why evacuate**
- What is the hazard**
- What are the boundaries**
- What time does the evacuation start**
- Who goes first**
- Where are the assembly areas**
- Where are the relocation centres**
- Where are the main evacuation routes**
- How long will the evacuation order be in effect**
- What should people take with them**
- Instructions on what to do with pets**
- Any other relevant and accurate information necessary**
- Transportation information**

The release of telephone numbers to the media and general public as to where they can call for information and assistance

The news release will be approved by the Mayor and or Warden, or CAO and or Clerk. Updates will be provided at regular intervals.

The Public Information Officer shall be the only source for the release of timely and accurate information to the media and the public.

2.06 COMMUNICATION OFFICER

Upon being alerted that an evacuation order will be put into effect, the communication officer will be responsible for the following:

To provide communications equipment as requested for the necessary locations:

- a) **Assembly areas**
- b) **Relocation centres**
- c) **Any health care giving facility to be evacuated or to receive evacuees**
- d) **To any other location requested by the ECC**

Ensure that all communication support groups have been notified and are on standby.

2.07 MEDICAL FACILITIES

All medical Facilities within the Antigonish region will be prepared to evacuate or receive evacuees from other institutions when an order is in effect. In either case the provisions of their emergency plan will apply. All possible assistance required to fulfill their requirements will be extended by the Emergency Management Organization.

2.08 RESOURCE DIRECTORY

For an extended contact list of resources please refer to the Antigonish Regional EMO Resource Directory in Annex I.

The Canadian Census of 2011 stated that the Town of Antigonish has a population of about 4582 people residing in approximately 1827 households. The County of Antigonish has a population of 14239 and 7084 households. The largest institutions in the county are St. Francis Xavier University, which has a seasonal population of approximately 5000 (students, support staff and faculty), and St. Martha's Regional Hospital day (400) and evening (200).

DISTRICTS BY RESIDENTS

District	Population (2011)	Area
1	792	Arisaig, Maryvale
2	836	Cloverville, Fairmount, Landing, etc
3	735	St. Joseph's, James River, Lochaber, etc
4	655	Western Fringe, Post Road, Addington Forks
5	713	Pomquet / LSR North Side
6	796	St. Andrews, Dunmore
7	425	Heatherton, Bayfield, Paq'tnkek
8	611	Tracadie, Monastery
9	642	Havre Boucher, Cape Jack, Frankville
10	829	Eastern Fringe, Greenwold, Williams Point