



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MR# 2022005

DATE: 3 February 2022

RE: Fire Department, Public Works seeks public's help in ensuring everyone's safety

AMHERST, Nova Scotia – The Amherst Fire and Public Works departments are asking the public to assist them this winter in ensuring the safety of all the town's residents.

"This winter, we've seen a dramatic increase in the number of fire hydrants that are completely buried in snow," Aaron Bourgeois, operations director, said on Feb. 3, 2022.

"In many cases, even the eight-foot pole that marks where the fire hydrants are located is barely visible."

Buried fire hydrants create a major safety hazard, Fire Chief Greg Jones said.

"If we have dig out a fire hydrant, it delays us from getting water onto a fire in a timely fashion," Jones said. "Those lost minutes digging out the hydrant could make the difference between the fire department saving a home or a life or losing the home and having a fatality."

Under the town's snow removal policy, the town does have the responsibility of clearing snow from around fire hydrants.

"The objective is that all fire hydrants will be accessible by emergency personnel 96 hours from the end of snow plowing operations for snowstorms up to 30 centimetres," Bourgeois said. "Following storms, it usually takes us a matter of minutes to clear snow from a fire hydrant, but when even the signs are nearly completely buried it can take a half an hour or more to clear out one. That clearly delays how soon we can make all the fire hydrants accessible to emergency personnel."

Both men noted many of the buried hydrants they have found this winter appear to be buried because snow has been plowed or blown over the hydrant.





They want to remind citizens the Nova Scotia Municipal Government Act forbids residents from dumping snow on town streets or over fire hydrants. The town has the option of issuing a warning or a fine.

Following the recent storms, the town did issue some warnings to citizens, but both men said they would prefer not having to issue any warnings or fines.

“While they are not required to do so, we do have many citizens who make the effort to clear snow from fire hydrants following every storm,” Bourgeois said. “The town really appreciates their efforts.

“We would also really appreciate it if people would help us ensure everyone’s safety by making sure they do not blow or plow snow onto the streets or over fire hydrants following any future snowstorm.”

-30-

Direct enquiries to:
Tom McCoag,
Corporate Communications Officer
902-694-6265
tmccoag@amherst.ca

