

AUDITOR GENERAL

Halifax Regional Municipality



Follow-up Review of Outstanding Recommendations – 2021-22 Audits

Management of the Fire Inspection Program
Management of Respectful Workplaces

April 2026

April 8, 2026

This ***Follow-up Review of Outstanding Recommendations – 2021-22 Audits***, completed under section 50(2) of the Halifax Regional Municipality Charter, is hereby submitted to the Audit and Finance Standing Committee of Regional Council.

Respectfully,

Original signed by

Andrew Atherton, CPA, CA
Auditor General
Halifax Regional Municipality

**AUDITOR
GENERAL**



Halifax Regional Municipality

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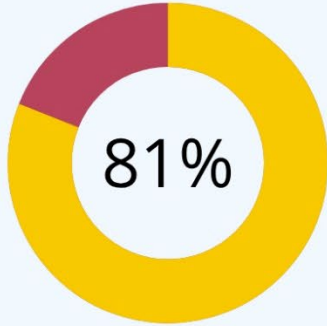
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Overall Follow-up Results

[INFOGRAPHIC IMAGE BELOW: This image depicts the overall results of this audit.

- 81% Outstanding Recommendations Completed.
- 3 of 6 of Management of the Fire Inspection Program Audit.
- 10 of 10 of Management of Respectful Workplaces Audit.
- 2021 Audit, Management of the Fire Inspection Program:
 - 14 report recommendations – 11 implemented – 79% complete.
 - Management has:
 - Developed plans to meet fire inspection obligations and training requirements.
 - Implemented a quality assurance process.
 - Management needs to:
 - Implement formal fire inspection schedule system.
 - Update fire inspection policies and procedures.
 - Develop performance indicators and targets.
- 2022 Audit, Management of Respectful Workplaces.
 - 15 report recommendation – 15 implemented – 100% complete.
 - Management has:
 - Established objectives with performance measures for enhanced workplace culture.
 - Updated harassment and violence policies.
 - Implemented quality control checks on harassment files.
 - Developed a whistleblower policy and process for investigating anonymous reports.]

Follow-up Review of Outstanding Recommendations – 2021-22 Audits



Outstanding Recommendations Completed



3 OF 6

Management of the Fire Inspection Program



10 OF 10

Management of Respectful Workplaces

2021 Audit

Management of the Fire Inspection Program

14 Report Recommendations ● 11 Implemented ● 79% Complete

Management has:

- Developed plans to meet fire inspection obligations and training requirements
- Implemented a quality assurance process

Management needs to:

- Implement formal fire inspection schedule system
- Update fire inspection policies and procedures
- Develop performance indicators and targets

2022 Audit

Management of Respectful Workplaces

15 Report Recommendations ● 15 Implemented ● 100% Complete

Management has:

- Established objectives with performance measures for enhanced workplace culture
- Updated harassment and violence policies
- Implemented quality control checks on harassment files
- Developed a whistleblower policy and process for investigating anonymous reports

Auditor General Halifax Regional Municipality

April 2026

Management of the Fire Inspection Program – September 2021

Implementation Status by Recommendation

Recommendation	Business Unit	Status
1. Halifax Fire should develop and implement detailed plans, with timelines, to meet fire inspection obligations.	Halifax Fire	✓
3. Halifax Fire should develop and implement a system of fire inspections, including how often buildings should be inspected. Scheduling and monitoring processes should also be developed and implemented to ensure fire inspections are completed as planned.	Halifax Fire	✗
8. Halifax Fire should develop and implement a quality assurance process to monitor that fire inspections are properly completed and documented. This should include developing guidance to promote consistency across inspection staff, which should help facilitate the quality assurance process.	Halifax Fire	✓
9. Halifax Fire should update its fire inspection policies and procedures and establish a regular review process to maintain them going forward.	Halifax Fire	✗
11. Halifax Fire should develop concrete plans, with timelines, for fire inspection staff to receive sufficient training in a timely manner.	Halifax Fire	✓
12. Halifax Fire should develop performance indicators for the Fire Prevention Division, establish targets, and regularly monitor against them.	Halifax Fire	✗

*Legend: ✓ = Completed ✗ = Incomplete

Management of Respectful Workplaces – June 2022

Implementation Status by Recommendation

Recommendation	Business Unit	Status
1. HRM should establish documented objectives, with performance measures, detailing how to achieve the strategic initiative of an enhanced workplace culture.	Human Resources	✓
2. Human Resources and Corporate Communications should develop detailed plans, with timelines, to implement the remaining recommendations from the 2016 and 2019 consultant reports. If management does not plan to implement certain recommendations, this should be documented and communicated to Regional Council as appropriate.	Human Resources	✓
3. Human Resources and Corporate Communications should update the Workplace Rights Harassment Prevention Policy and the Workplace Violence Prevention Corporate Procedure to address issues identified by external consultants, and by this audit. Additionally, implementation timelines should be established.	Human Resources	✓
6. HRM should implement a whistleblower policy that includes steps on how whistleblowers will be protected and an anonymous reporting tool. The policy and tool should be communicated to all HRM employees and accessible through HRM communication channels.	Chief Administrative Office	✓
7. HRM should implement a process to ensure information received through the anonymous reporting tool is appropriately reviewed and investigated. This should include detailed roles and responsibilities, and appropriate record keeping.	Chief Administrative Office	✓

Recommendation	Business Unit	Status
8. Human Resources and Corporate Communications should implement a process to assess identified workplace issues which fall outside of the scope of an investigation. This should include working with the business unit to ensure issues are addressed as appropriate.	Human Resources	✓
9. Human Resources and Corporate Communications should implement a process to periodically assess whether HRM employees have taken key respectful workplace courses. This should include taking steps to ensure those who have not completed training take it and considering whether the number of course offerings is sufficient.	Human Resources	✓
10. Human Resources and Corporate Communications should establish timelines for harassment complaint intake and investigation, and monitor files that go beyond the standard timeline to determine if additional steps are needed.	Human Resources	✓
12. Human Resources and Corporate Communications should implement quality control checks on harassment complaint files. This should be done by a second person to ensure all necessary documents are filed. A file completion checklist may assist with this.	Human Resources	✓
14. Human Resources and Corporate Communications should implement a process to ensure access to confidential information (physical and electronic files) is updated when individuals change positions or leave HRM.	Human Resources	✓

*Legend: ✓ = Completed ✗ = Incomplete

Background

The Office of the Auditor General, Halifax Regional Municipality, follows up on audits previously reported by the office after 18 months. We have established an additional process to follow up on outstanding audit recommendations from the initial follow-up after 18 months. These follow-up reviews report the progress management had made in implementing pending changes recommended by the Auditor General when the initial follow-up was carried out.

Objective and Scope

We completed the review of the outstanding recommendations from the 2024 follow-up reviews. The audit reports followed up were released between 2021-2022.

- Management of the Fire Inspection
- Management of Respectful Workplaces

Our objective was to provide review level, or limited assurance, on HRM management's implementation of the pending recommendations from the initial follow-up report. A limited assurance engagement provides a lower level of assurance than an audit. Conclusions are based on reasonability of what management tells us, and limited testing, rather than detailed testing, as would be found in an audit. This allows us to focus limited resources on new audits, while still providing assurance that management is addressing the issues we identified in past audits.

Our approach included discussing implementation with staff; reviewing policies, guidelines and processes; and other procedures we considered necessary.

This limited assurance engagement was conducted in accordance with the Canadian Standard on Assurance Engagements (CSAE) 3001 Direct Engagements published by the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada.

We apply CPA Canada's Canadian Standard on Quality Management 1. Our staff comply with the independence and ethical requirements of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Nova Scotia Code of Conduct.

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