



ROTHESAY

Public Advisory



Town Response to Extreme Weather Events

GENERAL

The climate in southern New Brunswick continues to become more variable. This bulletin is intended to provide information to Rothesay residents about how the Town is responding to these changes and to provide some advice on what individual households can do to reduce negative effects of extreme weather events.

WINTER SNOW & ICE STORMS

Town winter works crews monitor changing weather conditions throughout the day and schedule street maintenance activities to avoid heavy traffic periods where possible. Streets are typically plowed and/or a salt/sand mixture applied before the morning rush hour. Cleanup operations take place during the day sometimes resulting in driveway entrances requiring additional attention. In emergencies police and fire are able to contact plow operators directly to ensure emergency equipment will get to the site.

Plow trucks follow a regular pattern with main streets as a priority. Progress may be monitored by visiting the tracking application on the Town website. The trucks move as quickly as possible but are sometimes hampered by slow moving vehicles or those left on the road. Residents can help to ensure efficiency of road clearing operations by ensuring that no vehicles are parked on public streets and avoiding pushing snow from their properties on to the Town street. Blocked driveway entrances are an unavoidable result of snow clearing operations which may be repeated with heavier snowfalls. Property owners remain responsible for clearing their driveway entrances. If at all possible, the best response to inclement weather is to stay at home until crews can clear the roads.

A separate crew maintains the network of Town sidewalks removing snow and applying sand and salt to maintain a reasonably clean and safe walking surface. In exceptional circumstances sidewalks may not be plowed until the storm has subsided.

POWER OUTAGES

Power outages have become more common. Town crews have no capacity to re-energize lines and are not able to clear downed power poles while they may still be electrified or trees near downed power lines. These tasks are carried out by NB Power employees or contractors based on established service priorities. Generally the Town relies on the same sources of information available to the public including public media reports and the NB Power website: <http://www.nbpower.com/Open/Outages.aspx?lang=en>. NB Power encourages property owners experiencing outages to report the location to assist in analyzing the scope of the problem. NB Power and government emergency response agencies recommend households be prepared to be self-sufficient for three days. Information is found at <http://www.nbpower.com/media/81205/extremeweather.pdf>.

To reduce the inconvenience and disruption in the lives of Rothesay residents, Rothesay Council has established a reception facility at the Bill McGuire Memorial Centre on James Renforth Drive near the Renforth Wharf. This building is equipped with emergency power and municipal water. Residents may visit to fill water containers and charge cell phones. Other supplies may be available depending on the nature and duration of an incident. The reception centre will generally be opened the evening of the next day following the power outage and remain open until power has been fully restored. Hours for the reception centre will be posted on the Rothesay website. Persons for whom a power outage is a particular hardship such as those on dialysis or with limited mobility should discuss adaption measures with their care providers. During major events emergency services providers are often heavily taxed and may not be able to respond as quickly as desired.

Over...

HEAVY RAIN & FLOODING

Climate change brings more frequent, high-intensity rain events. The Town storm sewer system and natural streams take the water to the River but often over private property with resulting damage and inconvenience. The Town storm drainage network consists of open channel ditches and swales, storm sewer piping and catch basins and several substantial detention ponds which hold water back until the downstream channel capacity is sufficient. The existing piped storm sewers have limited capacity and can be overcome or surcharged when high rain volumes are experienced in a short time.

Most of Rothesay's existing storm sewers were designed for a five year storm; that is one which has a 20% probability of occurring in any year. Design standards for storm sewer system are constantly under review and new systems on private and public property employ current standards. However much of the system has been in place for years and the cost of major capacity upgrades to existing systems is very high both in financial terms and disruption to property. Current Town policy requires new development to include measures such that storm water leaves the site no faster after development than before.

Overland flooding through basement windows and doors may occur on properties close to natural drainage courses. Changes to the landscaping of the property may be necessary to reduce this risk. The Town storm water system includes more than 1200 catch basins. While Town crews troubleshoot catch basins continually during heavy rain, falling leaves, ice and other debris can quickly block an inlet completely. Clearing such materials from catch basins near your property may help to avoid flooding.

Rain water backing up into basements may occur for a variety of reasons and may vary from one event to the next. Foundation drains should be directed to the storm sewer system or a natural drainage course. Depending on the topography of the property, it may be appropriate to install a backflow prevention device to avoid water in the public storm sewer backing up into the basement. Clear water infiltration in the basement may mean the perimeter drain around the foundation has been compromised; for example due to the roots of trees. This will require a contractor to inspect and possibly replace the foundation drainage.

Sanitary sewer backups are a regrettable but common occurrence in heavy rain events. This happens because the sanitary sewer mains become filled with rain water from private storm drains improperly connected to the system, infiltration from manholes and other openings and blockages when foreign material is washed into the system. All new homes in the Rothesay are required to be equipped with a backflow prevention device on the sanitary sewer connection.

What can you do?

If you experience water in your basement during a heavy rain, your first call should be to a plumber or your insurance agent. If the plumber believes there is some problem with the public portion of the system, he will contact the Town (848-6600) and a utility worker will be dispatched as soon as available. (Town resources are limited and there may be a delay during heavy rain events due to call volume.)

If you are experiencing sanitary sewer backups, it may be desirable to have a video inspection of your sewer pipe. Such an inspection may identify root intrusion, pipe collapse, misaligned joints or other condition which can cause a blockage.

Although the Town may not be able to help you directly with flooding on your property, it is beneficial to notify the office of such incidents. This assists Town staff to identify problem areas for future infrastructure improvements.

Emergency Notices

The Town will generally use social media (Twitter, Facebook and the Rothesay website) to advise residents on emergency activities. Residents are urged to subscribe to the dedicated emergency notification system called Sentinel. This system allows for personalized contact information to be used in extraordinary circumstances to notify users in a specific neighbourhood by the means they find most suitable (cell phone, landline, email, text). Residents can subscribe to this system by going online at www.Rothesay.ca or phoning the town office at 848-6600.

PLEASE SIGN UP NOW!