

Fire Dispatch - Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia (FSANS)

Raising awareness of dispatch issues and risks is part of the association's action plan to improve Fire Dispatch. One part of that plan to start discussions was to draft a resolution and present it to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities, Association of Municipal Administrators Nova Scotia, Department of Municipal Affairs, and the Department of Internal Services. This was completed in the Spring 2018. The resolution is attached. I ask that the resolution be brought before Council for discussion and support. If Council supports it, you can make a request to the FNSM to have it added to their agenda. Should there be any questions about the resolution, you can contact Jim Roper (FSANS President) at jimroper@eastlink.ca.

Also attached is a presentation that includes some facts and figures to better inform stakeholders of the issues facing fire dispatching in the province. Please review it, and if you feel Council would be interested, I would be happy to make the presentation.

Please contact me if you have any questions or require more information.

Regards,

Paul

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A Resolution Regarding Fire Dispatch Services in Nova Scotia

Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia Resolution to Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities, Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia the Minister of the Department of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Department of Internal Services

2018/05/28

Whereas the one universal requirement for emergency service delivery in Nova Scotia is efficient, accurate, prompt and reliable dispatch services;

and

Whereas both police and ambulance services in Nova Scotia have professional dispatch services provided either directly by their responsible municipalities or by the province;

and

Whereas the largely volunteer fire service of Nova Scotia, other than the fully paid services in HRM and CBRM does not enjoy similar professional and coordinated services;

and

Whereas the recently published Nova Scotia Standard for Fire Service Dispatch clearly provides guidance as to the minimum technical, structural, and operational requirements of a professional fire dispatch service;

and

Whereas the Nova Scotia Trunked Mobile Radio System (TMR2) and the legacy Nova Scotia Emergency Mobile Radio System provide the foundational infrastructure to enable most of the technical requirements found in the Standard;

and

Whereas the current arrangements for most fire dispatch in the province are based on a competitive commercial model rather than a public service model, thus limiting the interest or ability of the current service providers to invest in contemporary structures or technology;

and

Whereas despite fire protection being a municipal responsibility, the province is the common element which could coordinate a public service model for fire dispatch;

A Resolution Regarding Fire Dispatch Services in Nova Scotia

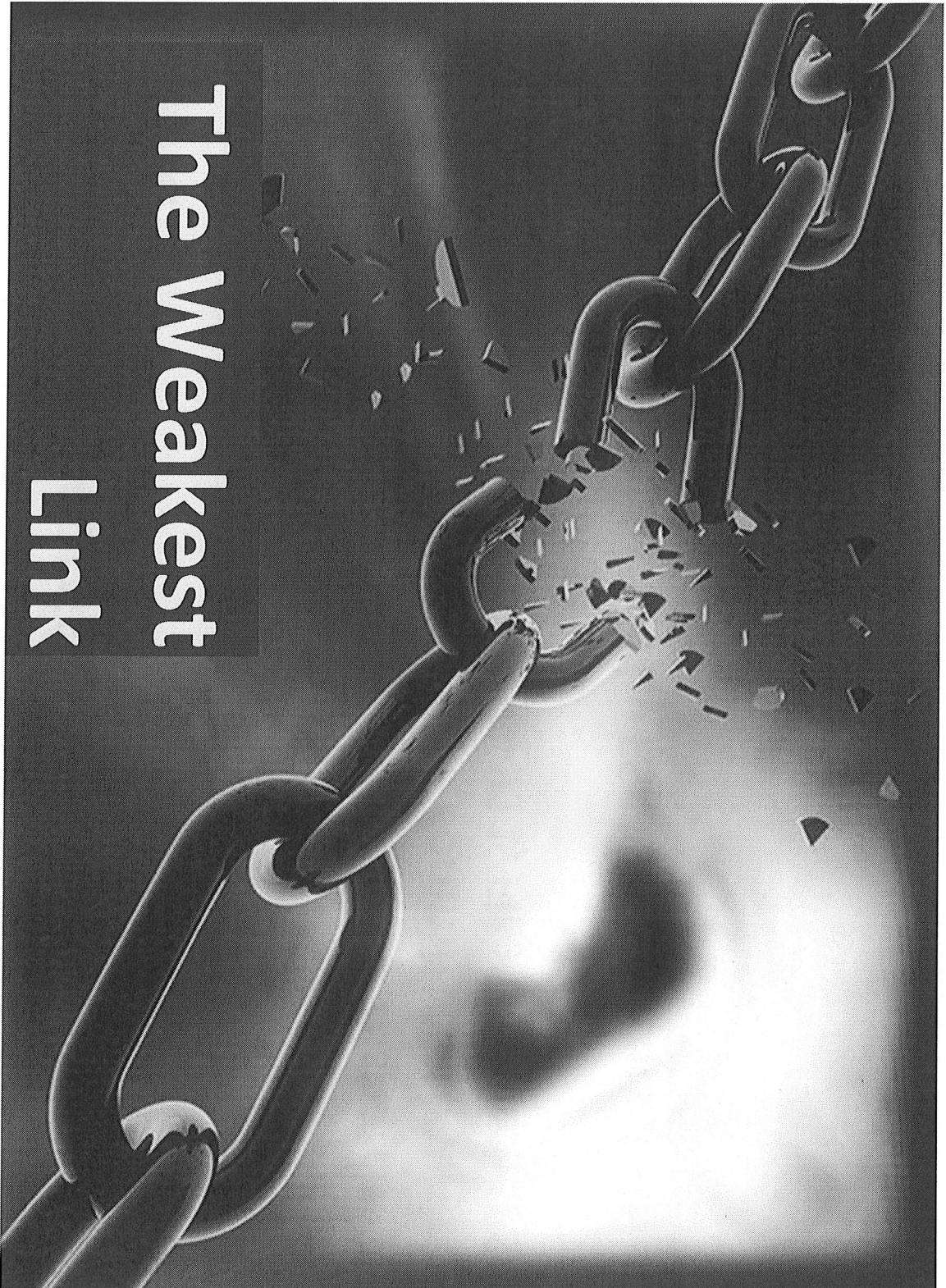
A Resolution Regarding Fire Dispatch Services in Nova Scotia

Therefore, be it resolved that:

The Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities, the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia, the Department of Municipal Affairs and the Department of Internal Services immediately open a discussion with the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia towards rationalizing fire service dispatch across the province with the Fire Dispatch Standard as the guiding principle;

and

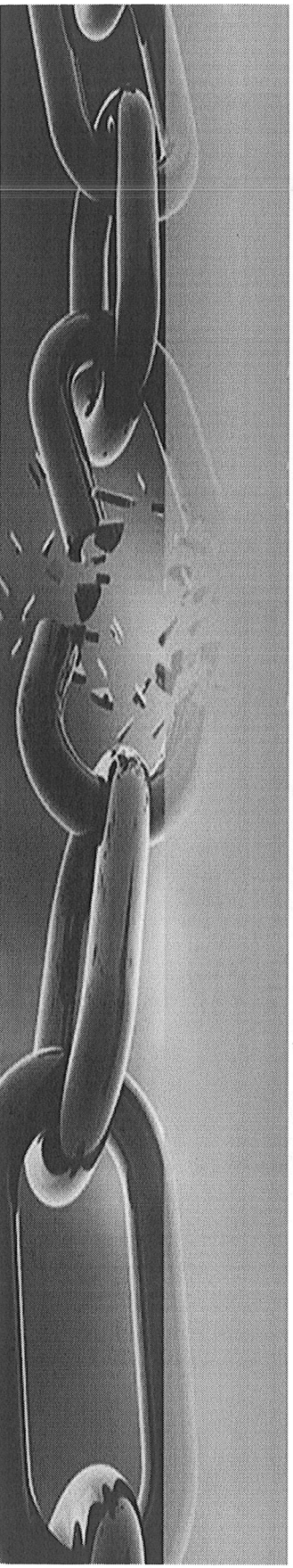
Be it further resolved that the proposed discussion include a comprehensive examination of the current aggregate costs of providing fire dispatch across the province (excluding HRM and CBRM).



The Weakest Link

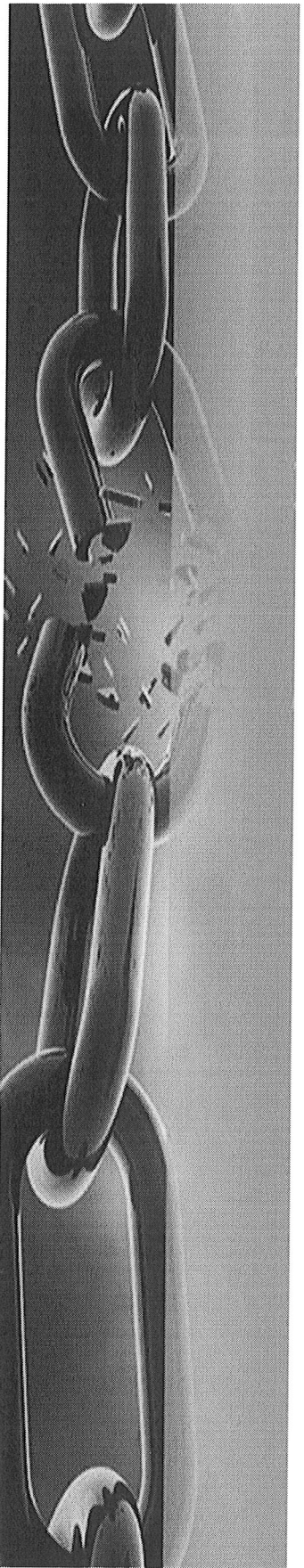
NS Fire Dispatch Standards Committee Background

- 2008 – Fage-Topping Study found inconsistencies and many gaps in fire dispatch across the province
- First recommendation was a Standard for Fire Dispatch
- Fire Marshal proposed FSANS strike a committee to which he would contribute: OFM, PSFC, EMO-911, Fire Dispatch, FSANS, Fire Service members at large
- Terms of Reference established by FSANS Directors 2016



NS Fire Dispatch Standards Committee Terms of Reference

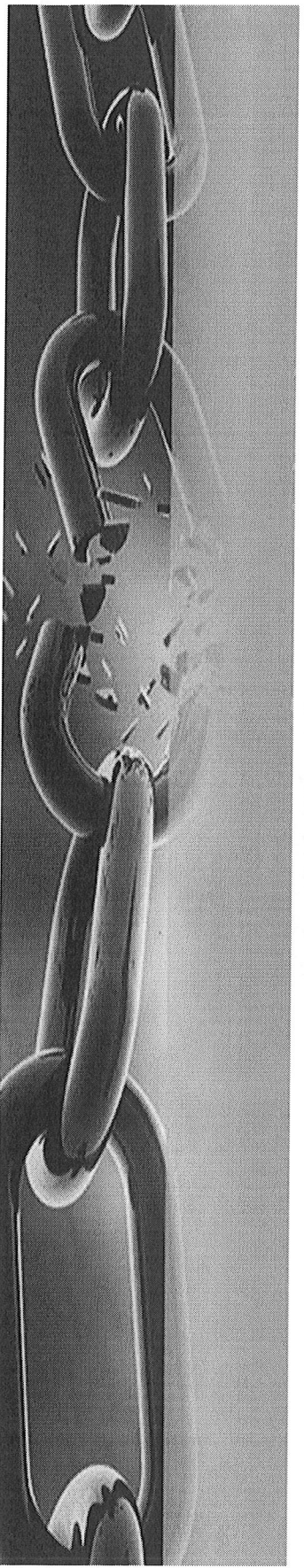
- **Consider all aspects of fire service dispatch & notification**
- **Compile existing Best Practices**
- **Ultimate outcome – a comprehensive Standard for Fire Dispatch and Notification in NS**
- **Provide a reference for municipalities & fire services and a benchmark for current or potential dispatch service providers**



NS Fire Dispatch Current State

- 2008 – 40,000 fire service emergency dispatches *
- Currently nine (9) contracted 'fire dispatch' points **
- Estimated aggregate cost of fire dispatch service - \$750k/annum **
- Approximately 280 VFD's in Nova Scotia ***

- * Source – Fage-Topping study 2008
- ** 2017 estimate excluding HRM, CBRM, Truro and Amherst
- *** excluding HRM



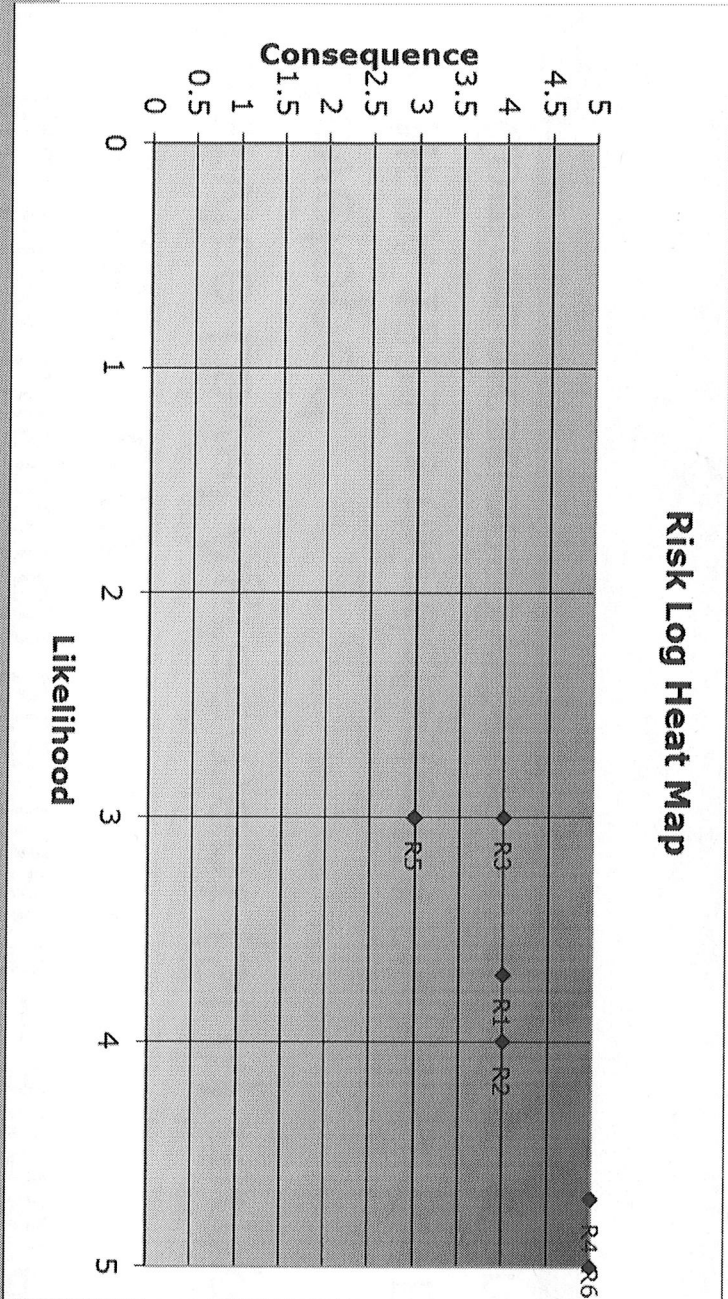
FSANS Fire Dispatch Risk Register

Risk #	Risk Category	Risk	Data		Likelihood 1-5	Consequence 1-5	Resulting Risk Level
			Labels	Description			
R1	External	Fire services accept a sub-standard dispatch service	R1	A majority of fire services and municipal units don't recognize that fire dispatch is an integral part of the incident response system	4	4	16
R2	External	Municipalities & Fire services are exposed to legal liability	R2	Fire Service fails to perform their duty arising from a failure of the dispatch system	4	4	16
R3	External	Inconsistent levels of service with no formal agreements	R3	No SLA's between Fire Services & Dispatch Services & few agreements, thus limited defence	3	4	12
R4	External	Lack of provincial support /leadership for fire dispatch standardization	R4	No common provincial public safety fire dispatch standard	5	5	25
R5	Operations	No redundancy of dispatch service	R5	No SLA between dispatch operators for continuation of service (no succession plan)	3	3	9
R6	Technology	Multiple points of failure due to inconsistent use of best current technology	R6	Various outdated and incompatible technologies in use	5	5	25



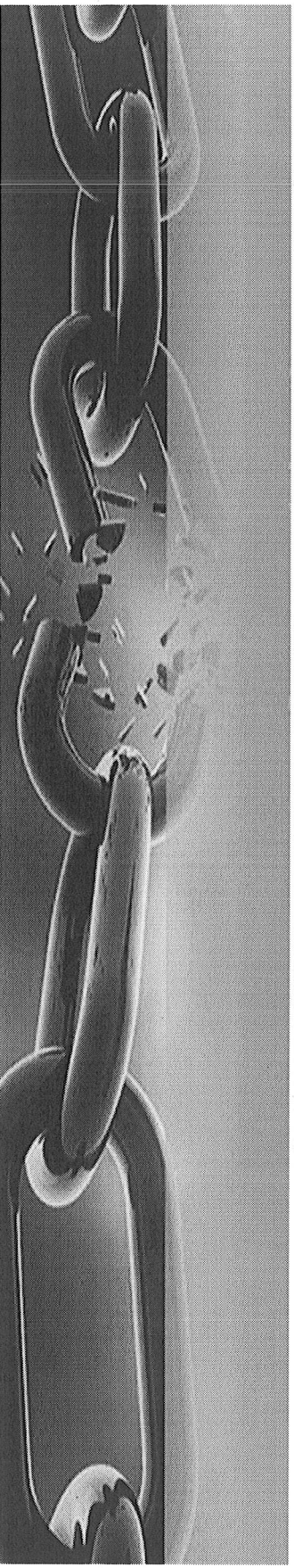
FSANS Fire Dispatch Risk Heat Map

Risk Log Heat Map



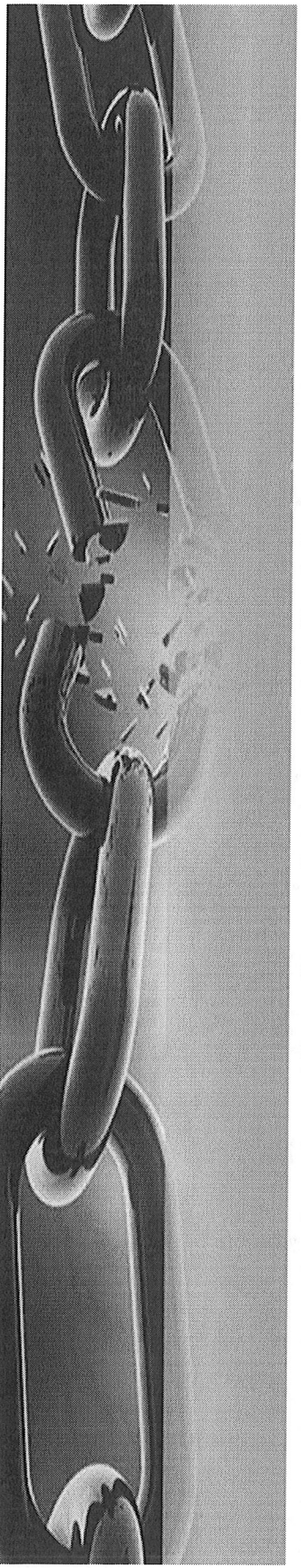
Resulting outcomes:

- NS Fire Dispatch Standard – adopted by FSANS
October 2017
- Service Level Agreement (SLA) template
developed
- ✓ NFPA 1221 is the defacto NA Standard on Emergency
Communications Systems – used as a reference



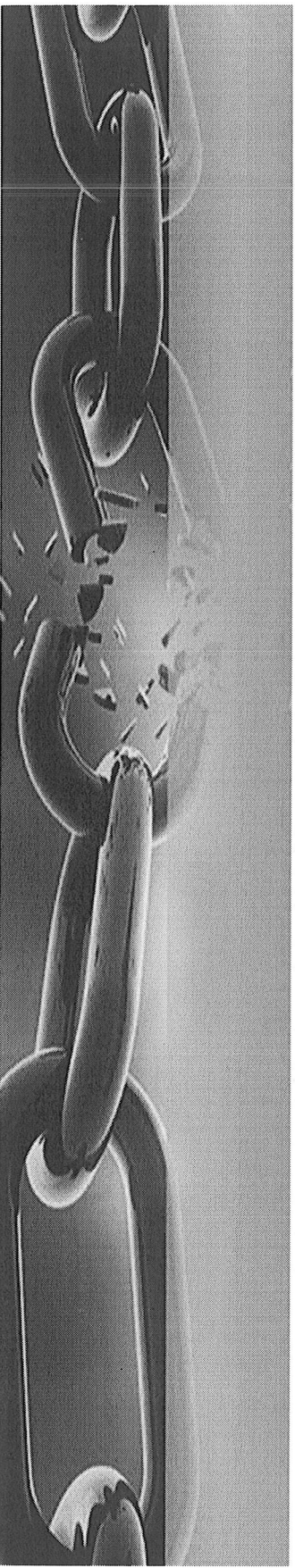
Benefits of adoption of a standard:

- Improved response reliability for Nova Scotia
- Cost Effective – best value for dollars spent
- Benchmark for consistent service delivery
- Potential for collection and reporting of dispatch statistics



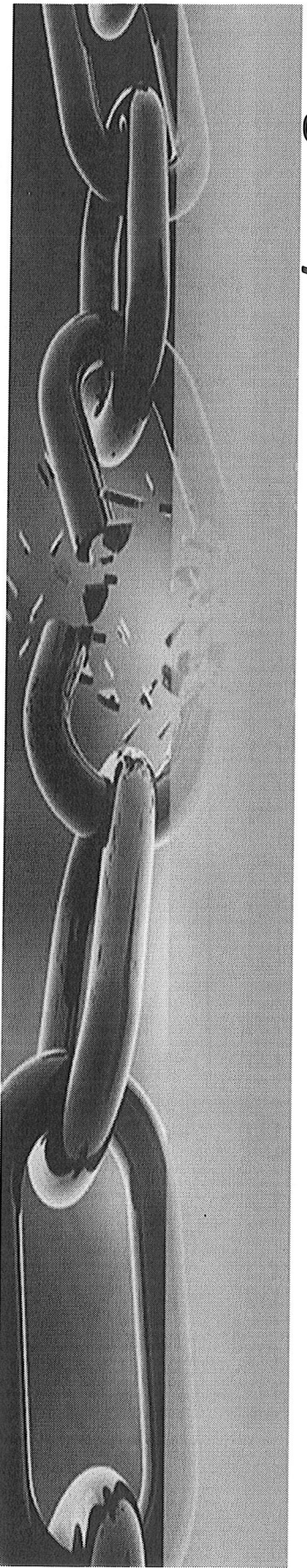
NS Fire Dispatch Standards Highlights:

- 1) Personnel – Training, Oral ability, Staffing levels**
- 2) Facilities – Fire resistance, Electrical standards, Survivability, Redundancy**
- 3) Technology – Survivability, Redundancy, Best value with back-up capability**



Highlights: General

- 1) Consistency – facilities dispatching multiple agencies must reach consensus on best practices
- 2) Overflow capability – when too many incoming calls overwhelm one facility
- 3) Business Continuity/Succession Planning
- 4) Service Level Agreement (SLA) for each client agency



Conclusions:

- 1) Dispatch is a universal requirement of every fire service whether volunteer, composite, or career
- 2) Reliability is an expectation of every citizen – which is currently not assured
- 3) Dispatch Standards Committee deliberations revealed a need for provincial coordination of a municipal responsibility – a logical extension of the E911 system

