



Town of Small Point to Adams Cove

What We Heard - Town Hall #5 Meeting Summary

Contents:

- Introduction
- Guest Speaker presentations: IBC, GIO
- Insurance Q&A
- Insurance stakeholder definitions (who does what?)

Introduction

The fifth Town Hall was held on March 3, 2026, with 30 participants (6 in person and 24 online). *Technical difficulties impacted the first hour of the livestream (including Facebook Live experiencing a blackout), however the Town is actively pursuing improved systems and equipment to avoid this in the future.*

The Town shared at the Temporary Housing Assistance Program has been extended to September 30, 2026. The Town is working on finalizing a Recovery Action Plan, based off the engagement with the community and the ongoing work of the recovery working groups and committee. This plan will be finalized in the coming month and published for residents. The Town is looking into new granting opportunities, including the [Community Wildfire Prevention & Mitigation Program](#) by the NL Department of Forestry. In closing, the Town said that the upcoming municipal general election is scheduled for April 16.

Representatives from the Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC), General Insurance Ombudsman (GIO), and Intact Insurance presented on topics related to a wide range of insurance considerations such as: consumer policy information, insurance claim steps, coverage considerations, dispute navigation, and broader industry trends for large scale disasters. After the presentations, community members were able to ask questions to the representatives about general recovery and insurance navigation.

Insurance presentation summaries

Website: [Insurance Bureau of Canada \(IBC\)](#)

IBC is a national the national association that supports consumer information and questions, and works with insurance companies to make sure there is a a fair balanced market. They spoke to the general trends of insurance after a natural disaster and provided guidance and information on general insurance options for households their own insurance policies.

Rates do not automatically increase after a disaster event, however IBC explained that there are increasing trends of disasters across Canada that are contributing to pressures and changes in policies such as; rising premiums, stricter underwriting, and reduction of availability in services.

After a disaster, policy holders have a 2-year limitation to finalize settlements of claims, however you can extend

your time by requesting an extension or filing legal action to extend the limitation period. Insurance companies may have temporary restrictions on new policies or existing policies, which will ease as the threat goes away. This does not affect the renewal process for policies.

IBC walked through what general home insurance policies could cover including dwellings, detached structures, contents and personal belongings, and Additional Living Expenses (ALE's). They encouraged people to look into their personal policies and provided general guidance on how to drive down rates. Policy holders should understand what their policy limits are, what are their deductibles and exclusions, and if there are optional insurance add-ons. Ask about discounts available for policies (seniors discounts, membership discounts, etc)

Mitigation activities and general maintenance of a household can reduce the likelihood and severity of an insurance claim. [FireSmart](#) strategies help reduce the risk of fire-related damages. Other examples of mitigation activities include; clearing vegetation around houses, cleaning downspouts and eavestroughs, installing sub pumps, and addressing water leaks early. If people complete mitigation activities, it's important to inform your insurance provider to talk about how this will help lower your insurance risk factors.

Website: [General Insurance Ombudsman \(GIO\)](#)

GIO is an independent organization that provides free and impartial dispute resolution services for insurance customers. GIO works on to support and provide recommendations for resolution between policy holders and their insurance companies. These determinations are not legally binding, however GIO works closely with insurers to find a balanced resolution. The dispute navigation process generally looks like:

1. An insurance company provides a final decision letter to the policy holder regarding the initial dispute. If the policy holder has concerns about the outcome of the final decision letter, they can bring the matter to GIO.
2. GIO will review the file, gather documentation, and determine if the concern has the grounds for further navigation.
3. If there are grounds for further dispute navigation, GIO will support a resolution between the policy holder and the insurance company. This can be done through informal conciliation, mediation, or formal adjudicative reviews.

Through dispute navigation support, GIO can help policy holders receive understand more about their policies, increase awareness and communication between policies holders and their insurance companies, and provide neutral guidance and information.

There are some insurance matters that are beyond the scope of GIO services, including:

1. The cost of insurance and rates.
2. The availability of insurance.
3. Dispute settlement procedures as required by law or designated regulatory authorities.
4. Matters that have been, or are, before the courts.

Questions & Answers

Questions were gathered from on-site attendees and online.

Question: Do you need to put in two separate claims for the Adam's Cove wildfire and the Kingston Wildfire?

Answer: Yes you do. It is two separate events that require two separate claims, even if it is the same type of event that occurred (fire).

Question: What is the difference between insuring as a guaranteed replacement vs market value?

IBC ANSWER:

- *Guaranteed Replacement:* coverage to replace lost items event if the cost exceeds policy limits. Replacement costs allow for flexibility so fluctuations in property value, inflation, and contractor availability.
- *Market Value / Actual Cash Value:* Replacement cost minus depreciation. it is the current value of an item in it's used condition, not the original price or cost of the replacement.

INTACT Answer: For INTACT, there are three common policies:

1. *Homeowners comprehensive:* this general standard policy for homeowners. This policy will have guaranteed replacement already in the policy rules.
2. *Broad policy:* Coverage for structures and contents for general risks. This also has guaranteed replacement as part of the policy.
3. *Basic fire coverage:* Structures and personal belongings. This kind of coverage will be more dependant on individual policies on if there is guaranteed replacement or market value .

Question: What can people do when you feel what they are offering is not enough?

INTACT Answer: Households do have the option to get their own appraisal to assess damages and a second opinion. The commercial rates for the second opinion would not be covered by the insurance company and would be a personal cost.

GIO Answer: GIO can support households who's second option appraisals determine a different value on the items during an insurance dispute. If GIO determines that there is an error between the two appraisals, GIO can reach out to your insurer on your behalf to discuss the considerations between the two amounts.

Question: What are the pros and cons of insuring seasonal properties / secondary residences?

INTACT Answer: From Intact's policy perspective, secondary residences are usually covered through actual cash value, while primary residences are often covered through replacement costs. Occupancy and vacancy are important factors as it will change the risk profile of the building.

Question: What is the reason behind deductions or extra costs being billed to households who had asbestos?

IBC Answer: Even if a house is under a claim, the liability clause is still active. If there is anything that happens on the property while someone is working, they can claim against that liability portion. Insurance companies want to know who is on the property doing what and what qualifications they have to be doing the work on that property because of that liability risk. Additionally, sometimes it will be tacked on if there is a limit issue for the extra 5% for debris removal.

INTACT Answer: Generally speaking, and not specific to INTACT, if there is a report on asbestos on the site, the entire site has to be deemed contaminated. There can be issues stemming from the limits of single policies around debris removal, and if the affected site has additional amounts they can add on.

Town of Small Point to Adams Cove: In regards to those who had support through Christian Aid Ministries, a lot of what they were doing in the area was ash removal. It became evident that there was a risk of asbestos debris mixed in with ash and other debris removal. We informed them so that they could take the proper precautions on and in what conditions they could support clean up.

Question: What should you do if you are dropped by a client after an event?

Answer: The best option is to talk to a broker or shop around to understand what other options are available in the area.

Question: What are the reasons behind recent premium increases? Are they directly related to the wildfires or are there other factors?

Answer: Premiums rise for a lot of reasons that are not related to disasters. Other examples include tariffs for goods coming over the borders, inflation, etc. It's difficult to pinpoint the seasons specific to this wildfire vs wildfires across the region vs non-wildfire related pressures. Each company has a different way of assessing risk.

Question: What data models are being used to predict future wildfire risk, and are they publicly available?

Answer: Each company has a different approach and own data models they use to interpret risk and create premium amounts. The data models are not shared between companies or regulators and are not publicly available.

Continued on next page

Break down of stakeholders in Insurance:

Property Insurance Companies: businesses that provide financial protection for properties against potential losses or risks. Customers pay premiums to insurance companies, who will then pay money towards claims based on their personal policies.

- Example: Intact

Broker: A representative who works with multiple insurance companies. Policy holders explain what they are looking for in an insurance policy, and brokers will look at the insurance companies that they work with to find a team and policy recommendations for you.

- Example: Steers

Trade Associations: A member-based organization that represents the insurance industry more broadly and can support customers and insurance companies with education, information, and general support.

- Example: Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC)

Regulators: Governmental bodies that provide oversight and ensure that the insurance industry is following laws and regulations.

- Example: [Superintendent of Financial Institutions](#) -NL Department of Government Services