



There's No Hiding From It... April 3 is a Day of Change



On **April 3**, a number of changes to Regulations and Forms will come into force. There is extensive information in this month's Registrar General's Communiqué on how the changes will impact our clients and staff. Please be sure to read these articles.

Registrars received comprehensive training on the changes on March 21 and 22.

There are several regulations and forms amendments under construction. The list includes:

Land Registration Administration Regulations These amendments will cover off the elimination of certain forms and requirements given the elimination of bundle submission. They will also include important provisions related to the recording of benefits and burdens; cleaning up the parcel register after subdivision; and a requirement for an extra original plan to accommodate daily plan scanning, among others.

Registry Act Regulations (Executive Council) These regulations will enable electronic submission of traditional documents, prescribe the cover form 44-E and the requirement for an extra original plan to accommodate daily plan scanning.

Registry Act Regulations (Minister) These regulations will prescribe cover forms under the Act. ❁

No More System Failures — Please!

Every day, the Land Programs applications are accessed by 1,500 different users. Naturally, the heaviest system usage falls during business hours. But between 5 p.m. and midnight the searching and submitting continue, and at any moment during the overnight hours there is someone viewing Land Programs data or e-submitting a document. This means that every hour the Land Programs applications are unavailable is an hour someone is held up from doing business.

In the past year there were 13 hours when the Land Programs systems were unavailable due to unplanned outages. This translates into an availability rate of 99.9 per cent for the system, based on 24-hour service. These numbers sound good, unless you were one of the people trying to use the applications during those 13 hours... and a client was waiting.

Efforts are continuously being made to reduce the chance of an unexpected system outage occurring. The challenge in system continuity is the cost and effort to prepare for a failure we don't expect to happen. The most recent issue causing an unplanned downtime was a failure in a single communication point between two computers. Now there is a second communication channel between the computers. This spring, a new server is being installed that will allow the applications to continue to operate if the server that runs Property Online fails.

In the challenging environment of 24-hour service and real time updates, the technical team at Service Nova Scotia continues to work toward improving the Land Programs applications and access to data, while ensuring the continued operation of all applications at all times.

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Nova Scotia's E-Land Registry

Over the past six years Service Nova Scotia has been working toward a vision of a 100 per cent electronically accessible Land Registry. This would mean that all documents, plans and indices would be searchable online all documents would be e-submittable.

Halifax will be the first registry to reach this goal, but the remaining 17 Land Registration Offices are not far behind. Below is the status across the province, excluding Halifax.

Five counties will soon have completed the 60-year back scanning of documents;
 By end of 2007/08, the remaining 12 counties will have completed the 60-year back scanning;
 Four counties will have all historical plans scanned by the end of March 2007;
 At least another four counties will have all historical plans scanned in 2007/08;
 Daily scanning of plans will be implemented province-wide on April 3; and
 Form 44 and Judgment Forms 46 and 47 will be able to be e-submitted as of April 3, province-wide.

In the fall of 2006, we surveyed many of our Land Registry users and asked for their input on priorities for system enhancements over the next 3 to 5 years. They said:

Scan all documents back to Book 1;
 Scan all plans;
 Add more E-sub forms (e.g. independent easement documents on Form 24); and
 Add more data linkages in Property Online such as probate documents, DNR records, etc.
 We have taken these suggestions into consideration when doing the planning for the next three to five years.

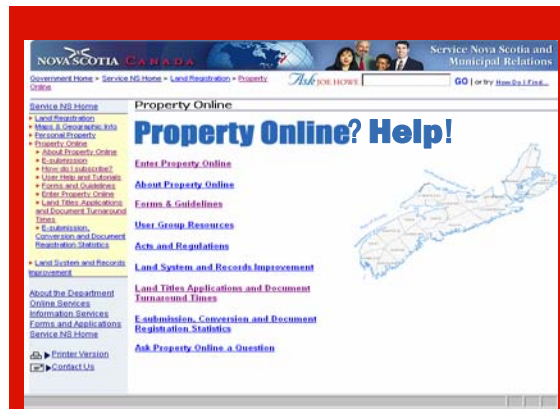
Halifax E-Land Registry

Service Nova Scotia has made significant investments in the Halifax Land Registration Office in order to scan documents and make more processes electronic, thereby making it possible for clients to search all documents, plans and indices as well as submit documents electronically. When the Halifax LRO is re-located in February 2008, the facility and processes will be transformed such that lawyers and title searchers who use the LRO on a daily basis will be able to conduct virtually all title searches and land transactions electronically.

All of the scanning and back keying is completed in Halifax except for 400 document books and a few odds and ends of plans.

The Land and Property Programs of Service Nova Scotia are pursuing our E-Land Registry Vision which includes links to various land records held in other departments and will be using the Halifax E-Land Registry model for the remaining 17 LROs over the next three to five years. 🌿

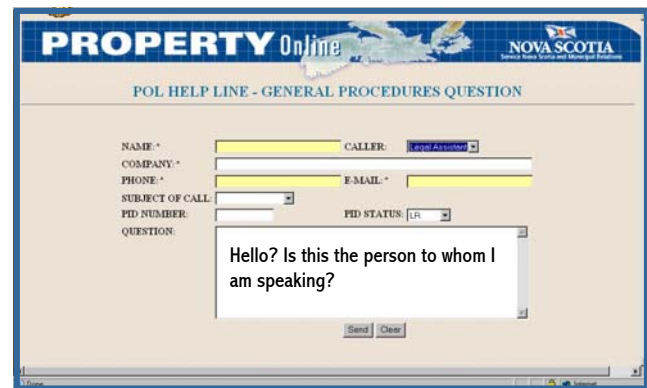




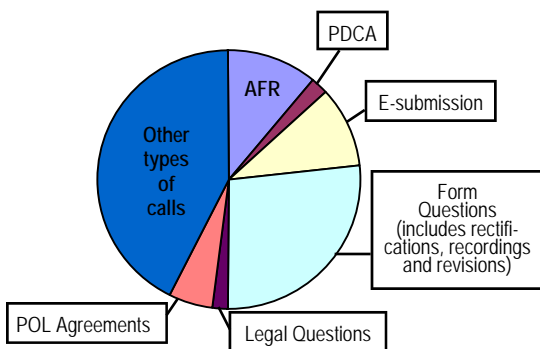
On January 9, 2007 we sent out an e-mail regarding a new link directly from the Property Online home page (www.nspropertyonline.ca) which enables you to submit questions on POL processes. In the first two months of the year, we received over 256 questions electronically. The Submit Question to POL function requires the submitter to provide applicable information (e.g. PID number, complete name, address, phone number and e-mail address). With users now providing the correct information, we are able to more accurately answer their questions. Although we often ask for additional clarification, this is to be expected until people become more familiar with documenting all of the details. Altogether, Property Online has logged and tracked over 920 questions in the first two months of 2007. Logging the calls allows us to clarify details to ensure POL is answering the correct question and to keep a record of what was asked and answered in the event of a subsequent related query. The following chart shows the breakdown of calls we received in January and February.

gathered to date tells us that questions concerning paper forms continue to be relatively high. In comparison, the number of calls

relating to e-submission is quite low and the majority of these calls are system-related and not questions relating to how to fill out the electronic form.



Help Line Calls



Tracking calls also allows us to gather stats on common issues for clients and the number of queries related to certain processes. The stats we have

We continue to receive legal questions but in this period they represented only two percent of the questions logged. As a reminder, the Department cannot provide a legal opinion for any questions submitted. Instead, the submitter is asked to discuss the problem with the lawyer involved, with other lawyers in the law firm, or to ask the question on the RELANS e-mail query tool.

Coming soon! Watch for a link within Property Online that will allow CROs to be ordered directly through the system. After logging in, the PID number is entered and the requestor's address will be accessed from the system. This should make your CROs come flying to you at a much faster rate!

Implementation should take place sometime in April.





At the Land Programs office, we constantly seek ways to improve the quality of the user's experience when working with our system. One area in which our clients find a challenge is in processing condominiums. At this time, there are approximately 300 condominiums containing roughly 11,000 units. While the majority of these are in Halifax County, more and more are being developed in other counties.

For external users, there is inconsistency in what information makes up the condominium common vs. the condominium units. This leads to confusion on which to use and what PID to put on the form; the result is an ongoing cleanup project by our staff to standardize condominium data in the system. The internal procedures for creating new condominiums are extremely cumbersome and complex, which can contribute to errors. In addition, the land registration concept is not applicable to the condominium common.

Over the past several months, we have conducted a detailed analysis of condominiums from both a business and system perspective. This exercise identified several areas where improvements can be made, some of which are:

1. A new view in Property Online for the condominium common. This new view eliminates all aspects of land registration from the condominium common and is a much more intuitive display of the pertinent condominium common elements.
2. All condominium related documents and plans will be filed against the condominium common on a Form 28. This resolves the confusion on which form to use and what PID to use on the form.
3. The internal system and business processes have been greatly streamlined. This reduces the risk of errors and facilitates a more standardized approach to condominiums.

It is anticipated that these condominium business and system changes will be implemented sometime during Fall/Winter 2007. Stay tuned for more details as they become available.

The Green Layer

The Crown Land Layer in Property Online was made available in early 2005. The "green layer" in the mapping was meant to serve as a flag to searchers of possible ungranted crown lands during the search required to register title under the Land Registration Act. It was not ever intended to be an authoritative source for information on Crown Interests.

Lawyers, surveyors and title searchers have always had the obligation to ensure that there is no outstanding Crown interest in land, so the presence or absence of the Crown Lands Layer in the mapping does not change this.

Concerns have been raised that the Crown Lands Layer has been creating confusion as to the extent of Crown ownership of lands in Nova Scotia. Even after the registration of lands under the Land Registration Act, closings have been held up or lost due to fear that the Crown Lands Layer in the mapping indicates that a Crown exists, when in fact it may not. The work required at the Crown Lands Record Center to investigate and remove the Crown layer from parcels where it has been determined there is no Crown Interest takes staff time and cannot be done immediately. During this time lag, subsequent conveyances may be negatively impacted by the misinterpretation of the green layer displayed.

As a further step to make it easier for searchers and lawyers to have access to the information they need in each LRO to determine if a Crown Interest exists, we plan to provide access to the scanned images of Crown Grants and Crown Index sheets in each of the 18 LROs. This would be an interim step before making this information available through a link in POL, hopefully within the next year. Stay tuned for more on Crown Grants and Index sheets in each LRO.

