

2024 Toronto Licensing Tribunal, Chair's Annual Report

Mary Lee, Chair

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**TORONTO LICENSING TRIBUNAL
CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

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1) INTRODUCTION

This is the 2024 Chair's Annual Report of the Toronto Licensing Tribunal.

The Toronto Licensing Tribunal (TLT) is an adjudicative tribunal that is part of the City's regulation of certain occupations and businesses, to protect consumers and the public. A licence holder or applicant may request a hearing before the TLT to appeal a refusal decision of the City's Municipal Licensing and Standards Division (MLS), MLS may refer a matter to the Tribunal where they seek to refuse, suspend, revoke, or have conditions added to a licence. A number of the cases before the TLT involve vehicle-for-hire licences, which include taxicabs. The TLT acts independently from MLS and the City when it reviews and hears cases in accordance with the evidence and the law.

Further information about the Tribunal is available at:

<https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/permits-licences-bylaws/toronto-licensing-tribunal/>

Submitted respectfully on May 22, 2025.

2) CHAIR'S MESSAGE

It is my privilege to submit the 2024 Annual Report on behalf of the Toronto Licensing Tribunal (the Tribunal).

The Tribunal operated with six active members in 2024, with one vacancy carrying over from 2023. That number was further reduced to five members due to one resignation in June. The remainder of the year was managed by five members. Training and development for members including shadowing of seasoned members, continued throughout the year, and by year end all member training and onboarding requirements have been met.

In 2024, the Tribunal continued to conduct virtual hearings via Webex. In addition to virtual hearings, the Tribunal conducts in-person hearings when requested. Previously identified opportunities through the Chair's 2023 Annual report to improve accessibility and ease of access to virtual hearing materials have largely been implemented. Specifically, five of six Tribunal recommendations have been implemented by Municipal Licensing and Standards and work is ongoing with the sixth recommendation. In addition, I am pleased to report the successful implementation of one other Tribunal recommendation involving the development and adoption of new rules of procedure governing Tribunal business meetings.

The year 2024 saw a significant decline in the volume of hearing appearances before the Tribunal compared to 2023. There were 185 matters before the Tribunal in 2023 and only 83 matters before the Tribunal in 2024. In addition, the Tribunal received 97 licensing and enforcement reports in 2023 and only 50 licensing and enforcement reports in 2024. A partial explanation for this decline in caseload was due to the uploading of tow truck licensing matters to the Province of Ontario at the beginning of 2024. The Tribunal has ongoing concerns about the declining trend in caseload and related operational impacts which are addressed in the Chair's recommendations.

In closing, the Tribunal continues to effectively deliver on its mandate. There have been several improvements to the hearing process and the governing of business meetings, and I wish to extend my gratitude to staff for their ongoing cooperation and assistance in this regard.

Yours sincerely,



Mary Lee, Chair

3) SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Member Changes

The Tribunal operated with a complement of six members between January and June; Member Bhalla resigned his position as of June 12, 2024.

Business Meetings

The Tribunal held three public Business Meetings: April 24, June 19, and November 21, 2024.

Subject matters discussed at the Business Meetings covered the following areas:

- TLT members proposed changes to revise the Tribunal Report Template and New Hearing Submissions submitted by MLS (Five out of six recommendations implemented)
 1. Ensure all documents are written in plain language.
 2. Place ICON screen prints at the end of the report as an Appendix rather than a chart.
 3. Place the Licensing history as an Appendix at the back of the report.
 4. Place the Summary of Decisions as an Appendix at the back of the report.
 5. Updated hearing material to include new information or highlighted to avoid duplication.
- Development and Implementation of Rules of Procedure, governing TLT Business Meetings; Rule #24
- Court Services staff and Tribunal members return to the Tribunal Office, following site renovations
- 2023 Chair's Annual Report adopted by the City of Toronto's Economic and Community Development Committee on May 29, 2024
- Toronto Licensing Tribunal Forms (Revisions and Updates)
- Toronto Licensing Tribunal General Administrative Updates
- Review of Hearing Schedules, Matters, Members and Materials
- Municipal Licensing and Standards updates, new reports including Licencing and Enforcement Cases for 2024 and projected cases for 2025
- Vehicle-for-Hire Report to Executive Committee in December
- Review of 2024 Annual Statistics
- Software and Technical updates (City issued computer devices and Webex hearing improvements)
- Stakeholder presentations and Court Services administrative procedures updates
- Toronto Licensing Tribunal Modernization Project and Administration of Tribunal Operations

Training

Member Lau completed the SOAR 5-day Adjudication Certification Program.

November 2024, Members Lau, Francis, and Cole attended the Society of Ontario Adjudicators and Regulators' Annual Conference (SOAR) The Administrative Forest, Pathways to Justice.

Confidential Tribunal member training delivered by Legal Services, City Solicitor's office, on procedures for the Toronto Licensing Tribunal (training held in-camera).

Toronto Licensing Tribunal Administration Office

The TLT is one of four adjudicative tribunals managed by the Court Services Division, and it has collaboratively worked with the respective City Divisions to provide ongoing client and operational support.

The Tribunal is operated by a team of Court Services Staff under the management of Tribunal Supervisor and Manager. The Supervisor, who is the Tribunal Administrator and Secretary continues to oversee the operations of the Toronto Licensing Tribunal and the Administrative Penalty Tribunal operations.

The Court Services team for TLT include three support assistants who process requests for a hearing filed with MLS by defendants or requests made by MLS for a Tribunal hearing. The team coordinates the scheduling of members and parties to hearings and hosts a wide array of activities in support of Tribunal proceedings.

Court Services Staff continued to provide services remotely, as parties prefer to participate electronically vs in person. There remain no impacts to access to justice and Court Services staff continue to ensure the technical requirements for the public and members are met while providing administrative support throughout 2024 to the Tribunal and to the public through various channels, such as video or audio connectivity.

The Tribunal Administration office is instrumental in the timely and efficient functioning of the Tribunal, which includes case management and timely distribution of confidential hearing notices and materials to the participants and the public, support to the Tribunal members, and collaborating with City Clerk's Office in the administration of member complement and annual reporting in addition to City Committee Payroll for member remuneration. Court Services Staff oversee the Agendas, Summary of Decisions for hearings and the release and posting of all Tribunal Written Reasons for Decisions on the Tribunal website.

Furthermore, the office ensures accountability for compliance with the Tribunal Relationship Framework and collaborates with the Municipal Licensing and Standards Division in addition to various stakeholders. The Supervisor/Secretary works with the Chair to provide training and orientation for newly appointed members and ongoing member scheduling and to provide statistical information and annual activity reporting on Tribunal performance indicators. In 2024, the Supervisor, Secretary supported a large-scale Municipal Project for the Administrative Penalty Tribunal, related to the transition of Provincial matter to the Municipality. This required dedicated time to the project, however the Tribunal remained supported at all times.

4) CHAIR'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Tribunal Caseload and Operational Updates

Issue:

In the Matters Heard Statistical Chart, there were 185 matters before the Tribunal in 2023 and only 83 matters before the Tribunal in 2024. In addition, in the Licensing and Enforcement Reports Statistical

Chart, the Tribunal received 97 licensing and enforcement reports in 2023 and only 50 licensing and enforcement reports in 2024.

In accordance with Section 11.1 of the Relationship Framework for the Tribunal, the Chair is required to convene a Business meeting at least twice a year to review the operation of the Tribunal, in conjunction with the Tribunal Administrator, to discuss emerging issues relating to Tribunal hearings and any other matter pertinent to the effective operation of the Tribunal. Given the demonstrated decline in hearings over the past two years, it would be of benefit to the Tribunal to receive regular updates on anticipated caseload from MLS.

Recommendation:

To ensure effective operation and efficient decision making of the Tribunal, it is recommended that Municipal Licensing and Standards staff provide an update on the anticipated caseload and related impacts, and that such operational updates become a regular agenda item at all future Business meetings.

5) STATISTICAL INFORMATION – 2024

In 2024, the Toronto Licensing Tribunal heard 50 new cases filed for a Hearing, which represents a 48 percent decrease from 2023. There were 10 updates to the MLS reports filed that expanded the matters to be dealt with in existing cases, down 67 percent from 2023. The Tribunal scheduled 83 appearances before the hearing panel compared to 55 from 2023. These trends are symbolic in nature, as less cases received leads to less matters that can be adjudicated for compliance.

The below table accounts for the number of scheduled appearances before a hearing panel in 2024.

Matters Heard

Year	Total Scheduled Appearances Before Hearing Panel
2024	83
2023	185
2022	166
2021	219
2020	156

The Tribunal scheduled hearings every Thursday, except for two breaks during the month of August and the last two weeks of December. Typically, there are 48 or 49 scheduled hearing dates per year. In 2024, there were 33 scheduled hearings dates reserved. Within these dates, 1 matter where the panel was seized, and 16 cancelled dates due primarily in the decline of new cases filed with the Tribunal.

All hearings were conducted virtually. While parties to a hearing have the option to request an in-person hearing, the Tribunal received no requests for in-person hearings in 2024 and electronic hearings continue to be a preferred method of access. The Tribunal is readily available to accommodate in-person, written or electronic hearing upon request.

In 2024, the Tribunal issued 1 Written Reasons for Decision (WRFD) following a hearing, the same number as in 2023, which continues to be down from previous years' trends. The decrease in WRFD is a result of the increased use of procedural conference discussions and matters settled at the start of regularly scheduled hearing dates. MLS processed license applications for issuance efficiencies.

Licensing and Enforcement Reports Filed with the Tribunal

MLS Reports	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Licensing Reports	48	94	72	94	170
Enforcement Reports	2	3	0	6	4
Total New Cases	50	97	72	100	174
Licensing Updates – Active Cases	6	28	21	38	26
Enforcement Updates – Active Cases	4	5	6	9	5
Total Reports and Updates	60	130	99	147	205

Adjournments and Withdrawals by the Parties or MLS

Matters Adjourned	Matters Withdrawn	Matters Abandoned
20	17	3

There were 9 out of 17 matters withdrawn, which represent Tow Truck licences (withdrawn by MLS at the January 11, 2024, Hearing). As of January 1, 2024, Municipal Licensing and Standards no longer had jurisdiction in the administration of Tow Truck licences, so the matters appearing before the Toronto Licensing Tribunal were not properly before the Tribunal and subsequently withdrawn.

Interpreters

Languages interpreted in 2024	Number of Requests
Amharic	2
Arabic	4
Farsi	3
Pashto	1
Persian	1
Portuguese	3
Punjabi	3
Somali	6

**Source documents for above: 2024 Toronto Licensing Tribunal Statistics Report.*

Categories of Licence Types

The cases before the Tribunal can be categorized based on the licence types that were involved. The Chart below lists the cases that were the subject of a hearing in 2024. The Chart indicates that some of the cases involved more than one type of licence, and some cases had more than one appearance.

In 2024, the top licence types that came before the Tribunal were (excluding licence withdrawal for Tow Trucks):

- Vehicle-For-Hire Driver’s Licence
- Taxicab Owner's Licence
- Eating Establishment Licence

The chart below identifies the number of licence types where an alleged contravention of the Municipal Code or other applicable laws was identified by MLS in that licence category. When a contravention occurs, MLS can deny the new application for a licence or renewal of a licence or refer the licence to a hearing before the Tribunal where the licence can be refused, suspended, revoked, or have conditions added to it.

Licence Categories by Reports Received in 2024

Licence Category	New Applicant	Applicant for Renewal	Holder of Licence
Eating Establishment Licence	3	1	1
Entertainer Licence	1	0	0
Holistic Practitioner Licence	2	0	0
Laundry Licence	2	0	0
Master Plumber Licence	1	0	0
Motorized Refreshment Vehicle Owner's Licence	0	1	0
Pedicab Driver Licence	1	1	0
Personal Services Settings Licence	2	0	0
Public Garage Licence	1	0	0
Public Hall Licence	1	0	0
Retail Store (Food) Licence	5	0	0
Taxicab Owner's Licence	0	0	17
Vehicle-For-Hire Driver's Licence	7	2	1
Total	26	5	19

**If taxicab owner also has a VFH licence, the report is counted here as one (1).*

Licence Categories by Matters Heard in 2024

Licence Category	New Applicant	Applicant for Renewal	Holder of Licence
Driving Instructor (V) Licence	0	0	1
Eating Establishment Licence *	5	1	2
Entertainer Licence	1	0	0
Holistic Practitioner Licence	2	0	0
Laundry Licence	2	0	0
Master Plumber Licence	1	0	0
Motorized Refreshment Vehicle Owner's Licence	0	1	0
Pedicab Driver Licence	1	1	0
Personal Services Settings Licence	1	0	0
Public Hall Licence	1	0	0
Public Garage Licence	1	0	0
Retail Store (Food) Licence	9	0	0
Taxicab Owner's Licence	2	0	19
Tow Truck Driver's Licence	5	2	1
Tow Truck Owner's Licence **	0	1	0
Vehicle-For-Hire Driver's Licence ***	13	5	5
TOTAL	44	11	28

**If taxicab owner also has a VFH licence, the report is counted here as one (1).*

***Source document: 2024 Toronto Licensing Tribunal Reference List.*

Tow Truck Industry Changes from 2023 into 2024

In 2023 The Province of Ontario announced new legislations that will change the Tow Truck industry Licensing provisions. This resulted in a reduction of Tow Truck Licenses issued by Municipal Licensing and Standards, which in turn removed a large percentage of matters referred to the Tribunal.

[Tow Truck Drivers – City of Toronto](#)

The new Legislation applies consistent rules to all tow and storage operators in Ontario. Previously, only some municipalities regulated towing and storage through local by-laws, all of which were different and offered inconsistent levels of protection.

Source: [Ontario Towing & Storage Regulations \(ibc.ca\)](#), [Towing and Storage Safety and Enforcement Act, 2021, S.O. 2021, c. 26, Sched. 3 \(ontario.ca\)](#)

6) MEMBERS

Position	Name	Terms of Appointment
Chair	Mary Lee	March 29, 2019 – November 14, 2026
Members	Verlyn Francis	March 29, 2019 – November 14, 2026
	Edgar-Andre Montigny	March 29, 2019 – November 14, 2026
	Joanne Lau	April 3, 2023 – November 14, 2026
	Peter Harris	April 3, 2023 – November 14, 2026
Resigned	Emily Cole (transfer)	April 3, 2023 – December 15, 2023
	Marc Bhalla	April 3, 2023 – June 12, 2024

Please refer to the City of Toronto Public Appointments website for the member biographies.

<https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/permits-licences-bylaws/toronto-licensing-tribunal/tribunal-member-biographies/>