

The Use of Paid Duty Officers and Alternative Traffic Control Measures for City Construction and Maintenance Activities

Date: January 29, 2026

To: Audit Committee

From: General Manager, Transportation Services

Wards: All

SUMMARY

City Council, through Item AU10.3, directed Infrastructure Services to report to the Audit Committee on the basis for requesting Paid Duty Officers (PDOs) for Toronto Water, the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), and Transportation Services construction and maintenance projects, including examples of common instructions provided to PDOs and alternative options for their use.

This report responds to that direction by outlining the circumstances under which PDOs are requested, the operational and decision-making framework used to assess the need for police authority in work zones, the type of activities PDOs are typically instructed to perform, and the situations in which alternative resources such as Traffic Agents or Traffic Control Persons may be appropriate.

PDOs are deployed in complex traffic scenarios where enforcement authority is required, such as construction near signalized intersections, school zones, high-pedestrian areas, or situations requiring regulatory enforcement or rolling closures. Transportation Services staff provide direction to PDOs, Traffic Agents, and other traffic management personnel to ensure that their activities align with the operational needs of each closure. This may include prioritizing turning movements at intersections, facilitating transit movements on diversion routes, or managing emerging congestion points to maintain safety, mobility, and overall network performance.

Decisions regarding PDO deployment are made on a site-specific basis using professional engineering judgement, guided by the Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) Book 7, and in collaboration with Transportation Services, construction applicants, and the Toronto Police Service.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services, recommends that:

1. Audit Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications for this budget year resulting from the recommendations included in this report. The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on November 12 and 13, 2025, City Council requested the Deputy City Manager, Infrastructure Services, to report to the February 12, 2026 meeting of the Audit Committee on the basis of requests for Paid Duty Officers for Toronto Water, the Toronto Transit Commission and Transportation Services projects and provide examples of common instructions provided to Paid Duty Officers and alternative options for the use of Paid Duty Officers.

[Agenda Item History - 2025.AU10.3](#)

COMMENTS

When a constructor requests a right-of-way closure for construction purposes, including City-led or TTC projects, the process begins with the submission of a traffic control plan outlining how all road users will be guided safely around the work zone. Transportation Services reviews this plan for compliance with Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) Book 7, in collaboration with the applicant and often with input from the Toronto Police Service. Staff may recommend adjustments to improve the plan's clarity or safety, and this initial review identifies whether conditions at or near the work zone require traffic management support, including the deployment of PDOs, Traffic Agents, or Traffic Control Persons (TCPs).

PDOs are requested where construction or maintenance activities create traffic conditions that require police authority, enforcement capability, or active management of complex traffic movements beyond the capabilities of non-police traffic control resources.

PDOs are typically requested where one or more of the following conditions are present:

- Construction activities occurring within or immediately adjacent to signalized intersections;
- Impacts within designated school zones or high-density pedestrian areas;

- Rolling, staged, or pilot lane closures on expressways, or major arterial roads;
- Temporary traffic regulations requiring police enforcement, including turn prohibitions, lane closures, or road closures;
- Situations requiring the override of existing traffic control devices;
- Situations requiring multi-lane coordination or enforcement that cannot be managed by non-police traffic personnel.

Examples of Common Instructions Provided to PDOs

Transportation Services provides PDOs with specific instructions to address the operational needs of each site and closure. These instructions may include prioritizing certain turning movements at intersections, supporting left-turning vehicles where regular operations are disrupted, facilitating the movements of transit vehicles on diversion routes, enforcing temporary traffic restrictions, and responding to dynamic traffic conditions that require on-site professional judgement. This coordinated deployment ensures safety, mobility, and effective traffic mitigation.

Alternative Options for the Use of PDOs

While PDOs provide the full legal authority and enforcement capabilities needed in work zones with complex traffic operations or situations requiring police powers, there are other traffic management resources that can support less complex or more predictable operations. Transportation Services staff evaluates whether these alternatives are appropriate based on the operational context, the complexity of each work zone, and the specific traffic management needs of each project. The primary alternatives to PDOs are Traffic Agents and Traffic Control Persons, each with clearly defined roles, authorities, and limitations.

Traffic Agents:

- Authority under Sections 134 and 134.1 of the Highway Traffic Act to direct traffic, close public highways, and remove obstructions.
- Can operate at signalized intersections, construction hot spots, key transit corridors, and key arterial streets.
- Limitations: Do not have enforcement authority, cannot issue tickets, and cannot manage situations requiring police powers. They provide moderate traffic management support but cannot replace PDOs where enforcement or multi-lane traffic control is required.

Traffic Control Persons (TCPs):

- Trained personnel who direct traffic using stop/slow paddles in single-lane, one direction traffic movements.
- Limitations: Cannot operate within 30 metres of signalized intersections and have no enforcement authority. They are suitable only for localized work zone traffic management.

PDOs remain a critical resource for managing construction and maintenance work zones where complex traffic operations or enforcement authority are required. Their deployment is guided by structured, site-specific assessments that considers traffic patterns, proximity to signalized intersections, pedestrian activities, lane configurations,

traffic impacts, and the need for regulatory enforcement. This ensures that PDOs are used where their authority and capabilities are required and will provide the greatest operational benefit.

Transportation Services assesses traffic management requirements for construction and maintenance activities on a site-specific basis, informed by the Ontario Traffic Manual, Book 7. Alternative resources, including Traffic Agents and TCPs, are employed where their skills and authorities are appropriate. This scalable approach allows Transportation Services staff to match traffic management resources to the complexity of the work zone, ensuring safe and efficient operations while making use of available resources.

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SIGNATURE

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