

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: J. Zaffino, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: June 5, 2025

RE: **Letter to the Minister of Transportation and Transit regarding Improving Response of Road Contractors for Traffic Control at Emergency Incidents**

Administrative Recommendation:

THAT the Board authorize the Chair to send a letter to the Minister of Transportation and Transit regarding improving response of road contractors for traffic control at an emergency incident.

Purpose:

The purpose of the letter is to ask the Minister of Transportation and Transit to enforce the need for road contractors to respond within the first two hours of an incident being reported, to provide traffic control at an emergency incident scene on the highway and rural roadways.

Business Plan Objective:

4.2 Support Protective Services

Background:

The Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) is responsible for providing traffic control at emergency incidents on highways and rural roads when required. MOTT contracts this work to various contractors, including AIM Roads, Yellowhead Road & Bridge (Kootenay Boundary) Ltd, Emil Anderson Maintenance Co Ltd, who provide traffic control services within the jurisdictional boundaries of the RDOS.

When an emergency incident occurs, the responding Fire Department(s) are notified and attend immediately. To ensure a safe work environment for all present at the response, Firefighters conduct Emergency Scene Traffic Control (ESTC), which they have been certified to do through the BC Municipal Safety Association.

It is the responsibility of the Fire Departments to notify the local MOTT traffic control contractor via fire dispatch when traffic control is required.

RCMP is the only other agency that has authority to close the highways and rural roads however, their resources are often stretched and are not always available to assist with Traffic Control.

WorksafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Regulation Part 18: Traffic Control, only allows firefighters to do ESTC for a maximum of two hours as per sections 18.6.1 Emergency Management and 18.6.2 Traffic Control Person Training. To provide ESTC beyond two hours requires trained

Traffic Control Persons or RCMP however, RCMP are typically short staffed and unable to support the response.

Analysis:

Historically, traffic control contractors within the jurisdictional boundaries of the RDOS often take far longer than two hours to arrive on scene. This leaves the Fire Departments in a difficult position from the standpoint of liability and scene safety. If the Fire Department stays past the two hours, WorkSafeBC coverage no longer exists for the Firefighters. If the Fire Department stops providing traffic control on scene it may create a dangerous situation for personnel and travellers as well as potential liability.

RDOS Fire Departments have reached out to MOTT, AIM, RCMP and other agencies for a solution to this problem. All agencies agree that there is a definite problem identified, but this argument continues as no one offers a solution.

In a recent meeting RDOS Fire Chiefs determined that in the event the traffic control contractors do not arrive on scene by the time 2-hours have elapsed the Fire Department will close the road by placing apparatus across the roadway on both sides and keep all personnel within that area to secure the scene.

Following the incident, the Fire Department, in conjunction with RDOS finance, will invoice MOTT for the time beyond two hours, for all fire engines required to make the scene safe, at the rate dictated by the Emergency Management and Climate Readiness Road Rescue Agreement.

The letter will request that the Minister of Transportation and Transit provide a long-term solution to provide traffic control to emergency scenes in a timely manner.

Financial Implications:

In the event the Fire Department is required to close the roadway after the initial two hours the Fire Department will issue an invoice to the Minister of Transportation and Transit.

Alternatives:

That the Board decides not to send a letter. That the Board asks that the Fire Departments take a different action regarding scene safety.

Communication Strategy:

A letter will be sent to the Minister of Transportation and Transit, and copied to the local Ministry of Transportation and Transit, Southern Interior Regional Office, AIM Roads, Yellowhead Road & Bridge (Kootenay Boundary) Ltd, Emil Anderson Maintenance Co Ltd.

Will a PowerPoint presentation be presented at the meeting? No

Respectfully submitted:

"Deborah Jones-Middleton"

D. Jones-Middleton, Senior Manager of
Protective Services

Endorsed by:

"Jim Zaffino"

J. Zaffino, Chief Administrative Officer

