



## Ontario Police Health and Safety Committee

### Guidance Note #19

#### Motor Vehicle Safety for Police Service Workers

*This guidance note has been developed to provide general information to employers, supervisors, workers, joint health and safety committees and health and safety representatives about the importance of motor vehicle safety measures and procedures to protect police service workers.*

#### Introduction

Getting behind the wheel of a car or working around one is one of the most dangerous things a police service worker can do. Police service workers can be injured or killed during high-speed impact collisions or being struck by a vehicle while conducting traffic stops or traffic control at events (e.g. film locations, parades, funeral processions or road and highway construction projects).

Many of these risks can be controlled by conducting risk assessments; developing and following safe work practices; providing information, instruction and supervision to workers and fostering a motor vehicle safety culture.

#### Hazards

Police service workers face a multitude of hazards that may include but are not limited to: hazardous road conditions, hazardous weather conditions, driver fatigue, distractions (e.g. mobile work station, cellphone, police radios), driving too fast for the conditions etc.

#### Risk Assessment

Conducting situational risk assessments is critical to ensuring worker safety.

Traffic control should be a progressive activity informed by a situational risk assessment, changing as needed based on personnel, equipment, specific circumstances etc.

#### Occupational Health and Safety Act

Under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*, police service employers and supervisors have a duty to take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker (OHSA clause 25(2)(h) and clause 27(2)(c)). This includes protecting a worker from motor vehicle/traffic hazards.

## **Construction Projects (O. Reg. 213/91)**

Sections 67 through 69.1 of the Construction Projects Regulation set out specific requirements for traffic control on a project. Where a worker at a project on a highway may be endangered by vehicular traffic unrelated to the project, the project must make use of measures set out in the regulation to adequately protect the worker. In addition, the Construction Projects Regulation requires the person directing traffic to be a 'competent worker' as defined in the regulation.

Refer to the Construction Projects Regulation for the most current requirements at <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/910213#BK17>

## **Motor Vehicle Safety Measures and Procedures**

Employers should develop a motor vehicle safety policy and implement, motor vehicle safety measures and procedures.

These measures and procedures may include but are not limited to:

- conducting situational risk assessments
- initiating traffic safety and control procedures for incidents near live traffic
- use of flashing vehicle lights
- use and limitations of personal protective equipment, including high visibility safety apparel
- establishment of a traffic control zone
- safe use of equipment to avoid distracted driving (e.g. mobile workstation, cell phones, police radio)
- reviewing motor vehicle incidents, including near misses, to inform changes to training, measures and procedures etc.
- establishment of safe work practices (based on situation risk assessments).

## **Maintenance of Equipment**

Police service employers are required to ensure that the vehicles and equipment they provide, such as communication devices, emergency lights, and sirens, are maintained in good condition (OHSA clause 25(1)(b)). To ensure the proper maintenance of vehicles, it is recommended that the vehicle be maintained as per the manufacturer's specifications and with consideration of the conditions under which they are used. Police service workers should conduct pre-trip inspections of the vehicle and any emergency equipment to ensure it is working properly.

## **Information, Instruction and Supervision**

Employers are required to provide information, instruction, and supervision to a worker to protect the health or safety of the worker (OHSA clause 25(2)(a)).

A supervisor is required to advise workers of any potential or actual health or safety danger of which the supervisor is aware (OHSA clause 27(2)(a)).

Information and instruction may include, but are not limited to:

- awareness of the dangers of working in or near traffic
- training on safe work practices
- distracted driving risks from multi-tasking
- the use and limitations of personal protective equipment including high visibility safety apparel
- the use of traffic safety equipment (e.g. signs, cones, flares etc.)
- vehicle blocking methods to create safe work areas
- pre-trip vehicle inspections
- traffic stop/traffic control measures and procedures
- prevention and management of fatigue

## **Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO) Book 7**

For information and guidance on traffic control for unplanned events, police services should refer to appendix 1 of the [Ontario Traffic Manual Book 7 Temporary Traffic Control for Unplanned Events](#) from the Ministry of Transportation. MTO Book 7 sections 3.2.5 and 5.4 address the use of Paid Duty Police Officers.

MTO Book 7 describes an 'unplanned event' as any incident that occurs without advance notice of time and location which disrupts normal traffic flow and/or presents a hazard to road users such as: collisions, vehicle breakdown, debris on the roadway, unplanned infrastructure maintenance (fallen poles/signs, watermain breaks etc.)

Police employers should assess the recommended layouts and traffic safety measures in Book 7 when developing a comprehensive traffic safety plan.

## **Personal protective equipment**

High visibility apparel is just one aspect of a comprehensive program to protect workers from being struck by passing vehicles. PPE should meet the high visibility reflective requirements outlined in [Canadian Standards Association \(CSA\) Standard Z96-15 High-Visibility Safety Apparel](#).

It is recognized that high visibility safety apparel may not be appropriate in some circumstances, for example when the officer must be inconspicuous as a part of his or her police work. However, the employer is still required to take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect the police service worker from traffic hazards.

For more information refer to *Guidance Note #5: Personal Protective Equipment and Guidance Note #8: High Visibility Garments*.

### **Safe Storage and Transportation of Items in Vehicles**

Items such as police equipment and evidence should be placed in a safe location inside vehicles and secured against movement to avoid worker and occupant injuries from projectiles in the event of a high-speed collision or impact.

Items such as compressed gas cylinders, crowbars, spare tires, and other rigid or sharp objects can easily become projectiles that may endanger occupants in the event of a collision. Vehicle related equipment should be stored as per the manufacturers' recommendations.

*The Police Adequacy and Effectiveness Guideline A1-008 – Marked General Patrol Vehicles*, advises that every Chief of Police should ensure that all marked general patrol vehicles have equipment and controls properly secured and mounted/installed in such a way as not to interfere with the safe operation of the vehicle.

### **Advancing a culture of health and safety together**

We can all work to advance a culture of health and safety through the development and implementation of a motor vehicle safety program to protect police service workers.

### **Acknowledgements**

The Ontario Police Health and Safety Committee is made up of professionals in police services from across the province with representatives from the Police Association of Ontario; Ontario Provincial Police; Ontario Provincial Police Association; Toronto Police Service; Toronto Police Association; Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police; Ministry of the Solicitor General; Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development; Ontario Police College; Ontario Police Health and Safety Association; Ontario Senior Officers' Police Association; and Public Services Health and Safety Association. The committee also receives input from experts in the police sector. The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development would like to thank the committee for their help in making this guidance note possible.

### **Additional Information**

Guidance Note #5: Personal Protective Equipment

Guidance Note #8: Wearing of High Visibility Garments

Police Adequacy and Effectiveness Guideline A1-008 Marked General Patrol Vehicles.

Policing Standards Guideline A1-010: Police Uniforms

For advice on selection, use, and care of high-visibility safety material and recommendations for hazard assessments, read [CSA Standard Z96-15 High-Visibility Safety Apparel](#)

For information and guidance on traffic control for unplanned events, read appendix 1 of the [Ontario Traffic Manual Book 7 Temporary Traffic Control for Unplanned Events](#) from the Ministry of Transportation.

### **References and resources**

[Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)

[Construction Projects Regulation O. Reg. 213/91](#)

[Highway Traffic Act](#)

Ontario Police Health and Safety Committee related posters:

- Seat Belt Safety Poster
- High Visibility Poster

[CDC/NIOSH -Law Enforcement Officer Motor Vehicle Safety](#)

RCMP – How officers can stay safe in their cars?

<http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/gazette/how-can-officers-stay-safe-cars>

### **Health and Safety System Partners**

<http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/websites.php>

This document should be shared with the workplace Joint Health and Safety Committee or Health and Safety Representative, incorporated into the workplace occupational health and safety policy and program and posted on the police service's intranet.

The Public Services Health and Safety Association may be contacted for assistance in the development and implementation of an occupational health and safety program, training and specialized services: <http://www.pshsa.ca/>

For more information, contact the Ministry of Labour, Skills and Development (MLTSD) Health & Safety Contact Centre toll free at 1-877-202-0008.

**For additional information on the requirements under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA), refer to [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_90o01\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90o01_e.htm)**

**This guidance note has been prepared to assist the workplace parties in understanding some of their obligations under the OHSA and the regulations. It is not intended to replace the OHSA or the regulations and reference should always be made to the official version of the legislation.**

**It is the responsibility of the workplace parties to ensure compliance with the legislation. This guidance note does not constitute legal advice. If you require assistance with respect to the interpretation of the legislation and its potential application in specific circumstances, please contact your legal counsel.**

**While this guidance note will also be available to MLTSD inspectors, they will apply and enforce the OHSA and its regulations based on the facts as they may find them in the workplace. This guidance note does not affect their enforcement discretion in any way.**