

Ontario's Tow Zone Pilot: Safer and Faster Clearance of Highway Incidents

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Abstract

Collisions and breakdowns along major freeways can result in partial or full closures for extended periods of time. This creates significant queues and delays that often contribute to secondary collisions and impacts to the movement of people and goods.

As noted in the *2023 Ontario Budget: Building a Strong Ontario*, congestion in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) currently costs the economy more than \$11 billion in lost productivity. Highways in the GTHA are among the busiest in North America, carrying an Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) volume of 450,000 vehicles. Therefore, collisions and other incidents impacting traffic have a tangible impact to the economy. For example, a two-hour delay where all lanes are closed can result in an economic impact of \$1M to \$2M (Source: MTO Traffic Office).

Providing towing and recovery services on high-speed provincial highways can be dangerous. To ensure safe and faster clearance there is a need to ensure that towing and recovery operators providing services on provincial highways are properly trained, equipped, and integrated with other emergency response entities.

Following extensive collaboration between MTO, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) and industry stakeholders, MTO launched a Tow Zone Pilot (TZP) on December 13, 2021, that introduced four (4) restricted towing zones on sections of provincial highways in the GTA where only authorized towing companies are allowed to provide towing and recovery services. The primary goals of the pilot are to enhance safety, reduce clearance times, and support the safe and efficient movement of people and goods on some of North America's busiest highways.

The pilot includes equipment, performance and storage requirements that are designed to improve safety, response, and clearance times, and ensure customer protection.

The pilot is planned for a duration of up to four (4) years and to date has been performing well. To measure program performance the pilot team carries out extensive data analysis to ensure that the goals and objectives of the pilot are being achieved.

During the first fiscal year of the program (April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023), more than 31,000 tow-related incidents were serviced, and MTO staff have made concerted efforts to progressively improve performance in areas identified as Key Performance Indicators. As a result, response and clearance times have progressively improved and

currently meet target parameters on average more than 85% of the time. Customer complaints are another important indicator of performance; they amount to less than 1% of total incidents. The pilot has provided additional benefits including better and more integrated towing and recovery services during severe winter weather events.

As part of MTO's commitment towards continuous improvement, the TZP is reviewed, and adjustments are made on an on-going basis in alignment with the goals and objectives of the program. MTO continues to work in partnership with the OPP, industry partners, insurance companies, municipalities, and other stakeholders to build on the successes of the pilot.

Background

The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) has some of the busiest highways in North America. Towing and recovery companies provide a key service on the province of Ontario's roads. Each day vehicles are towed or impounded because of breakdowns, illegal parking, motor vehicle collisions and other reasons. These varying circumstances require towing companies to provide a wide range of services, ranging from routine roadside assistance to vehicle tows, recovery, removals and clearing collision scenes.

Incidents on major highways can result in partial or full closures for extended periods of time creating significant traffic congestion that can result in secondary collisions, economic losses, and driver frustration. The time taken for clearance services is often a significant portion of the total time taken to return the highway to normal operations.

Road agencies across North America have been employing various programs to reduce the time taken for towing and recovery, especially for heavy-vehicle incidents. The beginning of the 21st century was a turbulent time for the towing and recovery industry in Ontario. The industry rapidly expanded due to increased traffic congestion, and correspondingly, there was a proliferation of consumer exploitation, allegations of criminal activity, and increased incidents of violence.

Not surprisingly, during this same period the towing industry in Ontario was regulated through a patchwork of requirements set out in many different Acts (e.g., **Consumer Protection Act, Highway Traffic Act, Repair and Storage Liens Act**, and the **Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act**). This led to several issues for all those involved in the industry, whether they be towing operators, insurance companies, enforcement officials, or end-users (e.g., first-to-the-scene chasing creating unsafe roads, inflated pricing, and lack of consumer choice for payments).

Although, many towing operators worked within the boundaries of the law, the standard practice among some towers was to race to the scene of a collision to secure a tow before their competition. This practice was referred to as “racing & chasing” or “first-to-the-scene” and created unsafe road conditions for all users of the provincial highway system, including motorists and incident responders (police, fire, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), maintenance providers, and towers).

Headlines such as the following became more and more common...

“For more than a year, a violent tow truck war has been raging across the Greater Toronto Area, erupting in fist fights at crash scenes and trucks being driven off the road as operators compete for bigger slices of the lucrative business. Dozens of trucks have been set on fire, and at least two men tied to the industry have been killed...” (The Globe and Mail; February 15, 2020)

On June 29, 2020, in response to the growing violence, corruption, and criminal activity in the towing industry, the Province of Ontario announced the establishment of a towing task force to develop a provincial regulatory regime for Ontario's towing industry. The task force's mandate was to focus on increasing safety and enforcement, clarifying protections for customers and businesses, improving industry standards, and considering tougher penalties for violators. The establishment of a task force also included a commitment to "review ways to improve our transportation system by clearing accidents more quickly which would minimize lane reductions and reduce congestion on our highways".

The towing task force built on the work done by the Quick Clearance Committee (QCC) that was formed in 2018. That committee which also advocated for faster and safer clearance, was made up of MTO, OPP, and industry stakeholders and was formed in response to several major commercial vehicle incidents wherein freeways remained closed for extended periods of time and related concerns.

Planning and Analysis Phase

The towing task force included both government and industry members. Government stakeholders were the Ministry of Transportation (MTO), the Ministry of the Solicitor General (SOLGEN), the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services (MGCS), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD), the Ministry of Finance (MOF), the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), and municipal police services. Key industry stakeholders included towing and storage operators, the automobile insurance industry, consumer advocacy groups (including commercial vehicle/trucking associations), and municipalities. From September to October 2020, the task force received feedback from 140 other special interest stakeholders as well as over 1,400 Ontarians who shared their towing experiences and suggestions that the province carefully considered.

Through analysis of these extensive stakeholder consultations, the towing task force advanced several initiatives to increase safety and enforcement, clarify protections for consumers and businesses, improve industry standards, and consider tougher penalties for violators. One of these initiatives was to implement restricted towing zones on sections of provincial freeways in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

On February 23, 2021, MTO obtained Treasury Board / Management Board of Cabinet approval for the competitive procurement to contract with a single tow and recovery company for each Restricted Towing Zone, to perform towing and recovery work for commercial and passenger vehicles, including the towing of impounds seized by the OPP.

The concept of the Tow Zone Pilot (TZP) was born. The pilot would support key government priorities, including consumer protection, clearing provincial highways quickly and safely, inform the broader development of towing related standards and policies.

Design Phase

The primary goal of the Tow Zone Pilot is to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and safety of recovery and towing work on sections of provincial highways designated as Restricted Towing Zones.

Based on the towing task force findings and recommendations, MTO developed a pilot program that introduced four (4) Restricted Towing Zones (RTZs) on sections of provincial highways within the GTA where only authorized towing companies can perform towing services. The freeways selected are some of the busiest in North America with a >400,000 Average Annual Daily traffic count.¹ Due to their high speeds and traffic volumes they also posed the greatest safety risks for both the public and incident responders.

Staff from the Special Highway Operations Initiatives (SHOI) Office within the Highway Operations Management Branch of MTO's Operations Division drafted the requisite amendments to the **Highway Traffic Act** to introduce the Restricted Towing Zones and simultaneously prepared the Secretariat of Cabinet Treasury Board submission to seek approval for the program.

The program was developed based on the following four (4) foundational objectives:

1. Enhance safety and reduce clearance times by ensuring that each Towing Services Provider has the required training, experience and is properly equipped and integrated with other public service entities responding to an incident.
2. Ensure that towing, recovery, and storage services within the Restricted Towing Zones use standard pricing that is consistent with industry benchmarks.
3. Eliminate the unsafe practice of racing to the scene of incidents, within the Restricted Towing Zones.
4. Provide data and information to support the development of standards, processes and practices and inform the development of regulations for the towing and storage sector.

During the development of the Request For Bid (RFB), care was taken to include each of these essential tenets into the detailed contractual requirements. Additionally, a

¹ Source: SydneyEnterprise: Portal (gov.on.ca); 400k represents Hwy 400 area only

comprehensive Restricted Tow Zone Services Manual was created to provide detailed operational requirements related to stakeholder roles and responsibilities, standard operating procedures, delivery of services, customer service, and performance requirements.

To promote safety and quick clearance, the MTO team developed performance targets that ensured a high standard for equipment requirements, response times, and initial clearance times, in North America (Table 1). In addition, an ambitious Key Performance Index was set where these times were to be achieved at least 90% of the time. The development of the pilot also included a comprehensive plan to monitor performance so that any necessary adjustments could be made during the implementation of the pilot.

Table 1 – Performance Targets by Class

Dispatch Class	Class Details	Response Time	Initial Clearance Time	Recommended Equipment
A	Heavy-Duty/ Medium-Duty Vehicle Collision	45 minutes	90 minutes	1 rotator boom wrecker 1 non-rotator boom wrecker 1 emergency response vehicle
B	Disabled Heavy-Duty or Medium-Duty Vehicle in a Traffic Lane	30 minutes	60 minutes	1 non-rotator boom wrecker
C	Disabled Heavy-Duty or Medium-Duty Vehicle on Shoulder not obstructing traffic or Impoundment	45 minutes	60 minutes	1 non-rotator boom wrecker
D	Medium-Duty Vehicle Collision	30 minutes	90 minutes	1 non-rotator boom wrecker
E	Light-Duty Vehicle collision	20 minutes	90 minutes	1 boom style tow truck 1 light duty tilt and load truck
F	Disabled Light-Duty Vehicle in a Traffic Lane	20 minutes	30 minutes	1 boom style tow truck
G	Disabled Light-Duty Vehicle on Shoulder not obstructing traffic or Impoundment	30 minutes	30 minutes	1 boom style tow truck or 1 light duty tilt and load truck

To educate and inform the public, a public-facing website (Tow Zone Pilot program | ontario.ca) was launched, a public ad campaign was created, and roadside signage was designed and installed. The Ontario Public Service website provides a detailed overview of the program including Restricted Towing Zone locations, instructions to stranded motorists, driver rights, tower obligations, rates, and frequently asked questions.

During the planning phase, members of the public and industry stakeholders recommended that a standardized public facing fee structure be developed and implemented to help reduce disputes related to invoices and build trust with the public.

MTO thoroughly analyzed market rates and various other sources to develop a comprehensive fee schedule that would be fair to all parties and best support the delivery of the pilot. To promote program transparency, the TZP fee schedule was posted at [Tow Zone Pilot Fee Schedule | Ontario.ca](#).

To address customer billing and/or towing and recovery behaviour concerns, a dedicated telephone line and email (TowZonePilot@ontario.ca) were established to help increase consumer confidence and resolve billing disputes or other issues related to incidents within the Restricted Towing Zones. Lastly, approved tow trucks each have a unique placard affixed to identify them as participants in the program; tow drivers who meet the pilot criteria are issued personal identification cards; and drivers are supplied with program brochures (in both official languages) to provide to motorists (Figures 1-3).

Figure 1 – MTO-Issued Tow Truck Placard



Figure 2 – MTO-Issued Driver ID Card



Figure 3 – Customer Handout

Tow Zone Pilot

Restricted Towing Zone - 1

Authorized Towing Company:
Contact Phone:
Contact Email:

The Ministry of Transportation, Ontario (MTO) has launched a Tow Zone Pilot involving restricted towing zones in the Greater Toronto Area, to help clear incidents such as collisions or vehicle breakdowns more safely and quickly

Restricted towing zones are defined sections of provincial highways where only authorized towing companies under contract with MTO may provide towing services

In a restricted towing zone, you must use the authorized towing company.

Rights of drivers in a restricted towing zone

Once your vehicle has been towed outside the Tow Zone Pilot area by an authorized towing company, you may select the towing service provider and destination of your choice (unless otherwise directed by the police)

If your personal vehicle breaks down in a restricted towing zone, the police or MTO may permit you to use your roadside assistance membership if you are in a safe location on the shoulder and safety concerns are not identified

For consumer protection information related to towing and storage services, visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/getting-towed-storage-lot>

Obligations of authorized towing companies

- provide prompt, safe, courteous, and high-quality service in accordance with the standards set by MTO
- show their identification to customers upon request and provide customers with the fee schedule and other information materials
- obtain permission to tow the vehicle to the customer’s destination of choice once the vehicle is outside the Tow Zone Pilot area (unless otherwise directed by the police)

Rates and methods of payment

The rates for the Tow Zone Pilot are listed at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/tow-zone-pilot-fee-schedule>

Towing of breakdowns and impoundments is based on a flat rate that includes towing for a 10-kilometre distance

Towing and recovery of collisions is based on an hourly rate. Hourly billed items are based on one-hour minimum for the first hour and 30-minute increments thereafter

Payment by credit card or debit card is preferred

Incident details

Location:

Other Vehicles(s):

Name of Driver(s):

Contact Phone/Email:

Tow Truck License Plate:

Service Date & Time:

Incident Number:

Taking photos at the scene is a good idea, if safe to do so

If you think your consumer rights have been violated, you can file a complaint with Consumer Protection Ontario (Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.)

- Toll-free: 1-800-889-9768 || GTA: 416-326-8800
- Toll-free TTY: 1-877-666-6545 || GTA TTY: 416-229-6086

To provide feedback to the MTO Tow Zone Pilot team, email TowZonePilot@ontario.ca

For more information about the Tow Zone Pilot, visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/tow-zone-pilot-program>

These actions were developed to promote safety; improve customer protection in Ontario’s towing sector; ensure reasonable tow rates for drivers; and to help clear highways faster after a vehicle collision or breakdown.

To assist with the administration of the Tow Zone Pilot, MTO contracted the services of a consultant services provider (Parsons Inc.) who possessed extensive knowledge of

other restricted tow programs in the United States. Parsons has provided ongoing expert advice, contact administration support, along with valuable institutional knowledge of the towing and recovery industry in North America. They have also provided lessons learned, incident debriefs, and have led the delivery of Traffic Incident Management training which has been tailored to the provincial legislation.

MTO’s initial approach was that a single towing company would provide services within a Restricted Towing Zone. After an initial unsuccessful procurement due to technical reasons, MTO revised the approach to using multiple towing companies, with each towing company being allocated a sub-zone within the Restricted Towing Zone. This approach provided greater operational flexibility to the province by combining the strengths of multiple towing companies as needed and allowing for effective ongoing review and adjustments to better ensure that the objectives of the pilot can be achieved.

Implementation Phase

Providing towing and recovery services on high-speed provincial highways can be dangerous. The Tow Zone Pilot ensures that tow operators are properly trained and equipped to perform towing and recovery services to ensure the safety of their staff, customers, and other drivers.

The Tow Zone Pilot program was implemented on provincial highways on December 13, 2021, with the objectives of enhanced public safety, improved customer protections, and reduced clearance times on some of the busiest highways in Ontario. The pilot was also intended to support the development of processes, standards and the regulatory framework for the towing and storage sector.

Each pilot location was carefully chosen based on factors including traffic volume and collision data. The Tow Zone Pilot in the GTA includes four (4) Restricted Towing Zones (Table 2) covering six (6) segments of the provincial highway network on sections of highways in the Greater Toronto Area:

Table 2 – Restricted Tow Zones

Restricted Towing Zone	Highway Section
Zone 1	Highway 401 from Highway 400 east to Morningside Avenue
Zone 2	Highway 401 from Highway 400 west to Regional Road 25, Highway 427 from QEW to Highway 409, and Highway 409 from Highway 427 to Highway 401
Zone 3	Highway 400 from Highway 401 to Highway 9

Zone 4	QEW from Highway 427 to Brant Street
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MTO contracted with 10 Towing Services Providers (TSPs) to provide clearance services and storage services in one of the four (4) defined Restricted Tow Zones (RTZs). TSPs operate exclusively within their designated RTZ as part of a restricted towing roster; each restricted roster includes up to three (3) TSPs (Figure 4). Beginning on February 1, 2022, the authorized towing companies in each restricted towing zone began to rotate through sub-zones monthly (Table 3).

No other towing company is authorized to provide services within these zones, unless otherwise approved by the Police Service or the ministry. Furthermore, TSPs shall abide by the agreement terms and conditions including customer invoicing (authorized fee schedule) for all authorized tows within the TZP.

Figure 4 – Sub-Zone Map

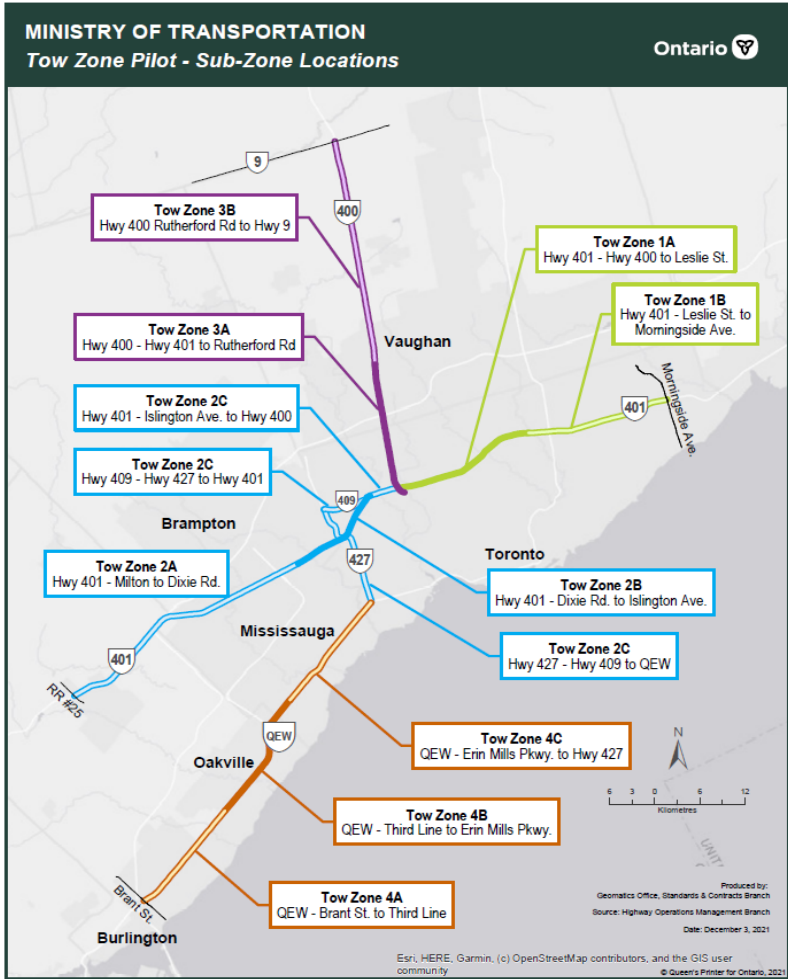


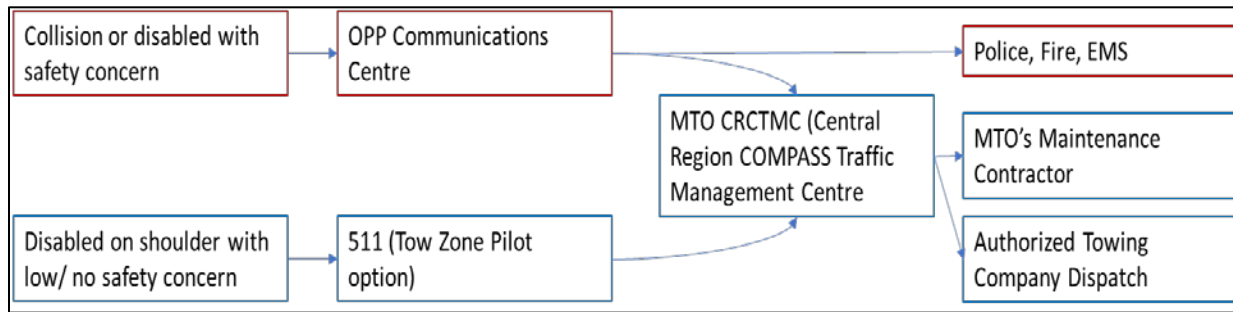
Table 3 – Sub-Zone Rotational Schedule (excerpt)

Sub-Zone	January 1, 2023	February 1, 2023	March 1, 2023	April 1, 2023
RTZ-1A	Williams	Williams	Williams	Williams
RTZ-1B	Abrams	Abrams	Abrams	Abrams
RTZ-2A	Fellows	Bill and Son	Fellows	Fellows
RTZ-2B	Classic	Fellows	Classic	Bill and Son
RTZ 2 C	Bill and Son	Classic	Bill and Son	Classic
RTZ-3A	COMTOW	JP	COMTOW	JP
RTZ-3B	JP	COMTOW	JP	COMTOW
RTZ-4A	JKM	ABC Towing	A Action	JKM
RTZ-4B	A Action	JKM	ABC Towing	A Action
RTZ-4C	ABC Towing	A Action	JKM	ABC Towing

Individuals needing the assistance of a TSP in a Restricted Towing Zone are instructed to call 911 if it is an emergency or if the incident is in a travelled lane of the highway. Otherwise, if the vehicle is in a safe location on the shoulder, they are instructed to call 511 and select the option for the Tow Zone Pilot. Alternatively, for light-duty vehicle breakdowns within Restricted Towing Zones, the motorist may call their roadside assistance provider if their vehicle is in a safe location on the shoulder. Currently, there are two (2) Roadside Assistance Service Providers (RASPs) participating in the Tow Zone Pilot program: the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) and All State.

When a towing and recovery services related call within a Restricted Towing Zone is made to 911 (OPP Communications Centre) or 511, MTO Central Region COMPASS Traffic Management Centre (CRCTMC) is notified, an incident log is initialized, and an authorized tow is dispatched (Figure 5). COMPASS also notifies the Area Maintenance Contractor who attends the site with an Emergency Response Unit (pickup with arrow board and/or crash truck) and additional support as needed.

Figure 5 - Tow Zone Pilot Dispatch Process



MTO uses the COMPASS incident logs to analyze each tow-related incident to assess conformance to the contract performance requirements for response and initial clearance times (Figure 6). This information along with closed caption camera footage and GPS tracking of tow trucks is also used to fact-check billing audits and customer complaints. To monitor performance, each authorized tow truck is equipped with a GPS tracker and access to the fleet is shared with MTO. Each tower is also required to provide unfettered access to their invoicing and tow tracking software for audit and compliance checks.

Figure 6 - Sample CommLog Incident Report

Time	Operator	From	To	Callback No.	Details
2023-04-06 18:46	< operator name >	511 -	CRCTMC		TOYOTA VENZA - LEFT SHOULDER > NOTIFIED SITE 4
2023-04-06 18:47	< operator name >	CRCTMC	TZ 2A - < TSP >		DISPATCHED - LIGHT DUTY
2023-04-06 19:02	< operator name >	TZ 2A - < TSP >	CRCTMC		ONSCENE
2023-04-06 19:13	< operator name >	TZ 2A - < TSP >	CRCTMC		CLEARED - SITE 4 ADVISIED TO DISREGARD

MTO, OPP and the TSPs meet on weekly/bi-weekly basis to discuss progress, issues, and areas for further enhancement. Other stakeholder meetings are scheduled regularly to provide program updates and collect feedback.

Performance Metrics

The Tow Zone Pilot requirements are reflective of MTO's heightened interest and responsibility to ensure that provincial highways assets are cleared safely and swiftly following disablements and collisions, to reduce traffic delays.

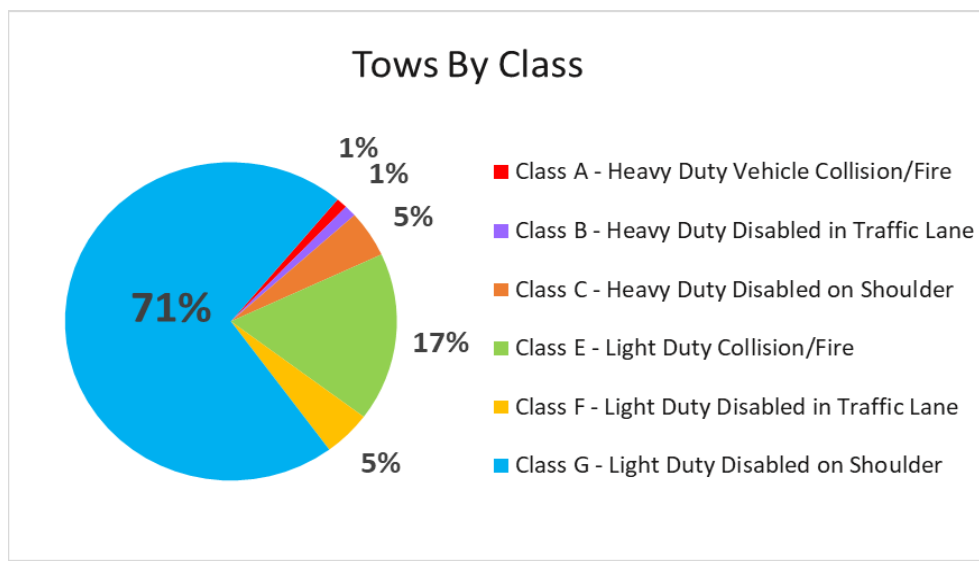
Prior to the Tow Zone Pilot, MTO had limited institutional knowledge of the towing and recovery industry and did not track or monitor incident response and clearance times by towing companies across the provincial highway network. However, with its launch, Key Performance Indicators were established to support the implementation and improvement of the program. These outcome targets are aligned with the goals of the program and include response and clearance times for disabled vehicles and collisions, customer complaints, and health and safety violations.

MTO continues to look for opportunities to enhance reporting, streamline data analysis, improve TSP performance, inform the ministry’s efforts towards faster and safer clearance, and assist with the development of towing industry standards and processes. In addition, MTO continues to monitor and work with the authorized tow service providers on specific incidents where issues are encountered and provides them with bi-weekly and monthly metrics and feedback for continuous improvement.

Key Statistics

- From ~~December 13, 2021~~ April 1, 2022, until March 31, 2023, tow services were provided for over ~~39,000~~ 31,000 incidents (avg. 85 per/day) within the Restricted Towing Zones.
- ~~Approximately two-thirds~~ The majority of all incidents involved light-duty vehicles (e.g., car, pick-up, Sport Utility Vehicles (SUV), minivan) that are either disabled, to be impounded, or abandoned on the highway shoulder (Figure 7).

Figure 7 - Tows by Dispatch Class



- Customer complaints amount to less than 1% of total number of incidents serviced by the Towing Services Providers.
- No Safety and Ministry of Labour (MOL) orders have been received by any TSP².

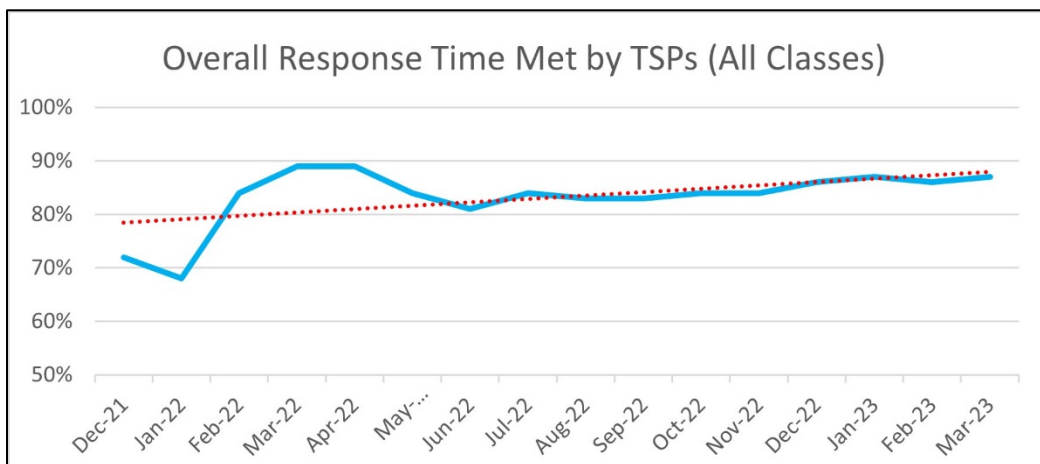
Response and Clearance Times

Towing response time and clearance time performance is closely monitored by MTO. To determine response time and clearance time results, the following information is required:

- dispatch time, arrival time and clearance time of each tow incident
- the dispatch class for the incident, which is determined by:
 - Class of tow (i.e., light-duty or heavy-duty)
 - Incident type (i.e., disabled/stalled, collision, etc.)
 - Incident location (i.e., shoulder or live lane)

Since the launch of the pilot, both response and clearance time requirements have been met, on average, over 85% of the time (for all dispatch classes) with noteworthy improvement along the way (Figures 8 & 9). For example, in January 2022, shortly after the pilot was initiated, the overall average response time by TSPs for all dispatch class types was 24 minutes and the average clearance time 46 minutes, compared to an average response time of 17 minutes and average clearance time of 22 minutes in January 2023, resulting in an improvement of 29% and 52%, respectively (Figure 10)³.

Figure 8 – Overall Response Time Met by TSPs (All Classes)



² Source; Parsons, Inc.; as of February 2023

³ Based on MTO CRCTMC Metrics filtered data where tow service was provided

Figure 9 – Overall Clearance Time Met by TSPs (All Classes)

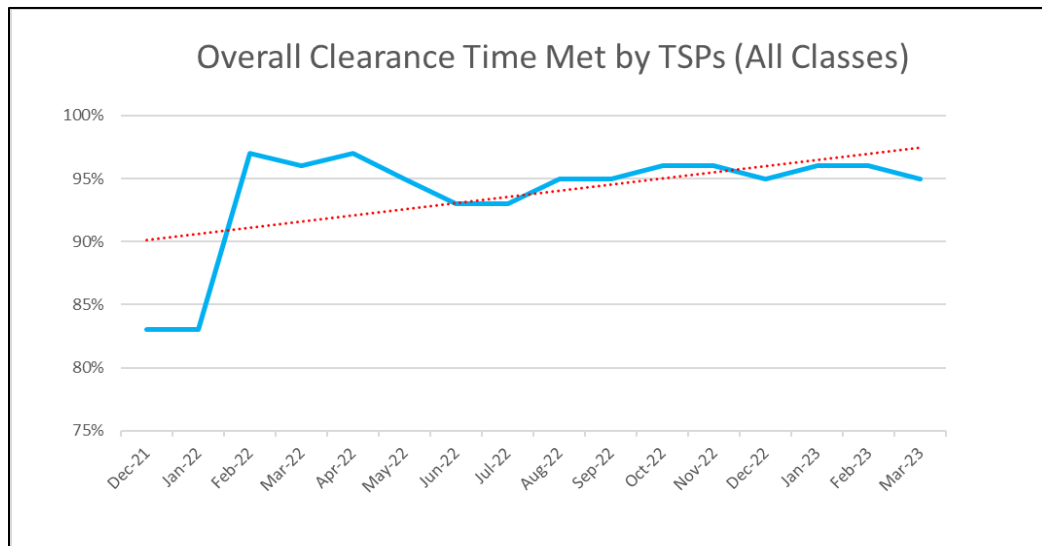
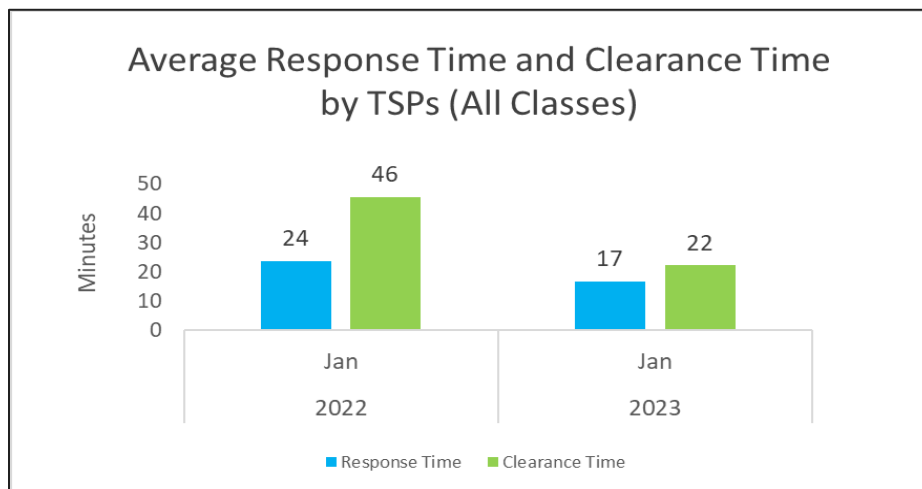


Figure 10 – Average Response Time and Clearance Time by TSPs (All Classes)



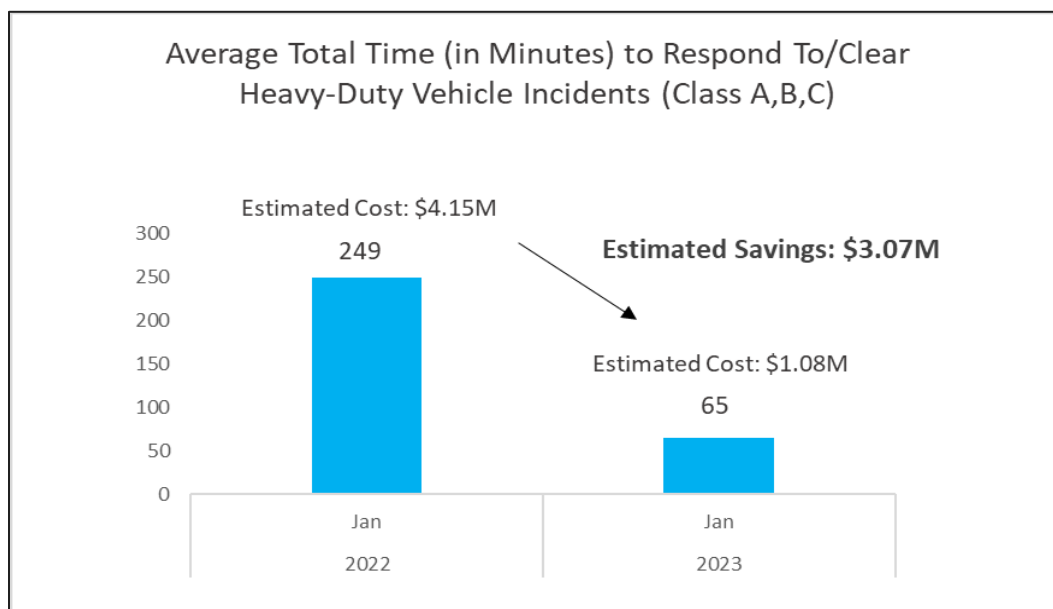
Economic Benefits

Although heavy-duty incidents account for less than 10% of total incidents in Restricted Towing Zones, they can result in disproportionately high traffic and economic impacts due to significantly longer duration of lane and highway closures. Based on traffic simulation modelling, a 2-hour delay where all lanes are closed, except one lane which

is left temporarily open to vacate trapped vehicles, can result in an economic impact of \$1M to \$2M depending on the location due to lost productivity and wages⁴.

The average total time to respond to and clear heavy-duty vehicle incidents has decreased significantly since the beginning of the pilot, resulting in tangible economic benefits because of its implementation (Figure 11). For example, where there are multiple lane closures, significant traffic queuing, and resultant delays, using an estimated economic impact of \$1M per hour (\$16,667/minute), the assessed impact in January 2022 due to time taken to clear heavy-duty vehicles was \$4.15M (based on an average total time of 249 minutes). As compared to this, the assessed impact was \$1.08M in January 2023 (based on an average total time of 65 minutes), representing an economic benefit of approximately \$3.07M (Figure 11).

Figure 11 – Average Total Time (in Minutes) to Respond To/Clear Heavy-Duty Incidents



Indirect Benefits

MTO has been able to leverage relationships built through the TZP to support other areas and municipalities during severe weather events. During the severe winter storm of January 17, 2023, in the GTA, the TSPs worked closely with MTO and OPP to ensure public safety and rescue stranded motorists. Similarly, during the severe winter storm of December 23-25, 2023, tow trucks from the TZP provided towing assistance to MTO in the Niagara Region and were also deployed to support several municipalities that needed assistance in removing stranded disabled vehicles.

⁴ Source: WSP, MMM Group Case Studies (March 2018)

Conclusion

The Tow Zone Pilot and other towing related initiatives are intended to enhance safety, improve customer protection, curb unethical practices, remove bad actors from the industry, and provide more long-term opportunities to legitimate towing companies.

To date, a lot of progress has been made, but more work needs to be done. The TZP is on the right track to achieve its objectives and most stakeholders are very supportive of the program.

Although the pilot has produced excellent tangible results, continued improvements are needed to enhance the efficiency of the program. Improvement areas include automation of dispatch, tracking and reporting, where practical; better integration of towing companies in incident response; exploring other areas where incident clearance time can be improved; enhancements to training and business practices; optimization of Restricted Towing Zones including equipment requirements; exploring opportunities for smaller towing companies, etc. Over the coming years, MTO plans to make more concerted efforts to better integrate the TSPs with other incident responders and explore other measures for faster and safer clearance.

Next Steps

Phase 1 of the pilot (Years 1 and 2) introduced Restricted Towing Zones on defined sections of 400 series highways in the GTA.

MTO is using the results and lessons learned of the first two (2) years of the pilot to carefully update and enhance the approach and options for Years 3 and 4 of the pilot.

By adopting informed and thoughtful improvements, MTO will be able to not only satisfy the goals of the program but also contribute effectively to improvements in the broader towing industry and better meet the needs of partners and stakeholders.

Timeline of Tow Zone Pilot Development

