

Meeting Notes

MTO/ORBA Structures Technical Subcommittee

Date	May 29, 2026
Time	10:00 am to 1:10 pm
Meeting Hosted By	ORBA
Location	Microsoft Teams

Attendance:

Attendee	Organization
Alfredo Maggio	Limen Construction Limited
Luigi Chiodo	Alliance Verdi Civil Inc.
Steven Crombie	ORBA
Steven D'Orazio	Clearwater Structures Inc.
Jigar Dabhi	Atlantic Industries Limited (AIL)
Sean Firth	EBC Construction Inc.
Jesse Hopkins	Ramudden Global
Bart Kanthers	Concrete Ontario
Derrick Mularchuk	Fidelity Group of Companies
Richard Mulder	Decast Ltd.
Alexis Del Rosario	ORBA
Jon Vallieres	EllisDon (Looby Construction Limited)
Andrew Weltz	Powell Foundations Inc.
Braiden Weston	McLean Taylor Construction Ltd.
Cole Zanchetta	RW Tomlinson Ltd.
Jenn Meleschuk	MTO, Contract Management Office
Mohammad Aqel	MTO, Engineering Materials Office
James Combe	MTO, Structures Office
Mireya Hidalgo	MTO, Contract Management Office
Kris Mermigas	MTO, Structures Office
Joel Magnan	MTO, Engineering Materials Office
Bo Ni	MTO, Engineering Materials Office
Ahmed Ouda	MTO, Contract Management Office
Melissa Titherington	MTO, Engineering Materials Office

Introduction / Announcements:

- Mike Doupe has left the subcommittee.

- Braiden Weston has joined the subcommittee.
- Kris Mermigas joins today as a guest.

Open Items

Nov 25-3, Concrete Finishing Equipment

Description:

- MTO proposed, for discussion, a Special Provision to amend OPSS 904 by adding requirements for side rollers for bridge deck finishing machines and clarifying expectations around hand finishing. The intention is to take a position on different types of equipment that are available but not currently in the specification, and to reduce incidents of concrete elements not being consistently finished to grade.

Discussion:

November 2025:

- MTO decided to require screed rails over girders to minimize deflection risks and have maintained that position. However, the deck cantilever is now traditionally finished with hand tools and results can be inconsistent. Including side rollers on the screed could improve grade consistency and they have been available for some time.
- ORBA notes that finishing machines are expensive, and hand finishing would still be required at the edge of barrier reinforcement and around screed rail supports. Assuming a 300mm clear zone from the equipment, a 1.5m cantilever has less than 1m of actual roller finishing. Bar marking, templates or other methods could also achieve specified grades. Concerns were raised about potential interpretation of the proposed language.
- MTO presents additional language about truss screeds and other mechanical/power finishing equipment.
- ORBA notes that tolerances will probably be tighter on a truss screed than hand finishing tools. The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) has standards for surface tolerance and finishing requirements that could be referenced. It is recommended to be less prescriptive to cover more situations, e.g. a closure strip wouldn't use a truss screed.

May 2026:

- The current specification only permits a bridge deck finishing machine or hand finishing. MTO is attempting to permit additional types of equipment and proposes updated draft language to introduce categories of components with more finishing equipment options.
- ORBA provides some estimates of bridge deck finishing machine costs for MTO to consider as the additional cost may not be worth the benefits received to finishing approaches. Additional language is suggested for finishing exclusion areas such as construction joints. It was suggested to remove the buried components category.
- ORBA has concerns with infringing on means and methods of the contractor to achieve performance targets like tolerances, and with placement plans requiring contract administrator approval.

Action Items:

- MTO will take back feedback for review.
- Item closed.

Sept 25-2, MTO RCP Acceptance Limit

Description:

- OPSS 1350 has an RCP acceptance limit of 2,500 Coulombs at 28-days. ORBA proposes the MTO consider providing an alternative 56-day acceptance criteria if the 28-day result does not pass.

Discussion:

September 2025:

- ORBA asks MTO to consider testing RCP at 56-days following a failed 28-day test, with the understanding that as concrete continues to age and mature, the permeability performance improves.
- A 56-day RCP acceptance threshold would need to be significantly more stringent than a 28-day acceptance threshold to be considered equivalent material, taking into account the well-established improvements in RCP results with increased curing time. Based on this, delaying testing would not necessarily result in higher acceptance rates, but would result in more significant project impacts.
- MTO specifications include a referee process that can be invoked. The higher performance threshold of the referee test considers that RCP performance increases with time and is to account for the time difference between testing and referee testing.
- MTO's opinion is that it is better to test earlier than later to have fewer project impacts in the event of a failed test.

November 2025:

- MTO has done some review on seven years of previous RCP results. Results from 2024 are currently being reviewed and could change the review outcome, but the passing rate for RCP testing has been between 91% and 97% for each year reviewed. MTO's position is that it is better to know of a test failure sooner than later to mitigate impacts, and the failure rate appears to be low so there does not appear to be a need to change the specification.
- MTO's database is based on 28-day RCP tests so there is a question about what an acceptance value would be at other testing times. The improvement of concrete microstructure over time, therefore RCP values, is well established and documented. Higher slag contents delay the improvement of RCP values, so MTO is reviewing quality assurance testing of higher slag content mixes.
- ORBA suggested a second acceptance threshold for 56-day testing so a mix that fails 28-day testing that takes longer to achieve the expected permeability performance could still be acceptable if it meets a lower 56-day RCP value that compensates for concrete's improvement to RCP values over time.

May 2026:

- MTO does not have the test data available to establish a 56-day RCP value criteria. When reviewing referee samples, they are being tested at close to 50 days already.

However, because the test failure rate is low, there is not a large dataset available at this date either.

- MTO is looking into the possibility of testing unused referee samples to collect more data at other testing dates, but it will take time. The information will be shared with ORBA when available.

Action Items:

- MTO will share RCP testing data when available.

Sept 25-4, MTO Concrete Discharge Time Limit

Description:

- ORBA proposes MTO increase the concrete discharge time allowance from 90 minutes to 120 minutes where supply and full discharge of a concrete delivery cannot be completed within 90 minutes from an MTO approved batch plant.

Discussion:

September 2025

- CSA A23.1:24 allows 120-minute discharge time with owner approval so ORBA members have, without success, requested MTO on specific contracts to allow the use of set-retarders to extend discharge time. Concrete producers believe they can demonstrate that concrete properties are not impacted by this discharge time extension through trials.
- MTO did many trials over the years with respect to workability retaining admixtures but the outcome was not successful. Hydration is slowed, but it is still happening and there will eventually be an impact on concrete properties and durability.
- MTO, Concrete Ontario, and admixture companies have recently discussed new technologies. MTO is open to reviewing new technologies impact on this requirement when Concrete Ontario is prepared to discuss.

November 2025:

- An ORBA member is moving forward with a potential trial for Spring 2026, to be submitted to MTO for review if confirmed.

May 2026:

- MTO and Concrete Ontario have been discussing trials for evaluating discharge time. The trials will include evaluating discharge time up to three hours and Concrete Ontario members would like to start trials in June.
- MTO is willing to discuss trials with individual suppliers if anyone does not want to engage in the Concrete Ontario trial, including after this trial is completed.

Action Items:

- None.

May 24-3, Compensation for Mobilization Costs for Rapid Concrete Base Repairs

Description:

- ORBA put forward this item at the end of the meeting because members have encountered an issue where a contract specifies Type A concrete removal and rapid

set concrete replacement for concrete pavement patching but after asphalt removal, no concrete repair is required and the quantity for the payment item is 0.

- ORBA notes the small closure times permitted requires mobilization of all equipment and materials expecting the quantity of work identified in the contract documents. When the quantity is not accurate, there is no contractual mechanism for payment.

Discussion:

May 2024:

- ORBA notes that rapid hardening concrete and proprietary materials need to be purchased and on-site ahead of removal of asphalt or it will not be available for the repair within traffic closure time. A method of payment for these materials and mobilization costs for labour/equipment is requested.

September 2024:

- ORBA received contract information the morning of the meeting and provided four contract number examples for the MTO to review.

November 2024:

- ORBA suggests that paying some fixed percentage of the quantity sheet repair unit tender price, regardless of the quantity of work performed is another option that could alleviate contractor concern of 0-quantity rapid concrete base repairs. For example, a 2m³ patch is listed in the contract that is found to not require repair and 20% of that patches' tender price is paid.
- MTO review of contract number examples previously provided suggests that compensation was addressed at the field level, but MTO is still reviewing how the issue might otherwise be addressed. There was discussion with ORBA about what types of fixed costs are associated with the work.

May 2025:

- MTO review suggests that 0-quantity issues have been addressed by change order at the field level. MTO will not be making a change to the item payment clauses and will address each contract specific issue on a case-by-case basis via change order.
- ORBA disagrees with this approach. There is no contract language that says a change order will be issued for a 0-quantity repair, it is difficult to price the risk into the item at the time of bidding without knowing whether or not a particular contract administrator will issue a change order. Pile driving pays for equipment mobilization and a separate item pays for length of driven pile. ORBA also has examples of this issue where a change order was not issued.

September 2025:

- MTO and ORBA reiterate points from the previous meeting. MTO re-iterated previous meeting action for ORBA to provide requested examples of projects that have not received additional compensation by change order to review if a policy change or clarification is required. ORBA will provide contract examples.

November 2025:

- MTO and ORBA reiterate points from the previous meeting. MTO re-iterated the previous meeting action for ORBA to provide requested examples of projects that have not received additional compensation by change order to review if a policy

change or clarification is required. ORBA will provide contract examples when they're received.

May 2026:

- MTO reiterated that tender package examples submitted did not demonstrate examples where a contractor went to site, encountered a zero quantity item, and then was not compensated/there was no change order issued.
- MTO and ORBA agree to close the item. If examples are provided where a contractor was not compensated for this issue, the item will be re-opened.

Action Items:

- Item closed.

Nov 23-1, Volumetric Mix Truck Trials

Description:

- This item was originally put forward by ORBA at the Contracts and Documents Subcommittee. MTO proposed that technical discussions about concrete acceptance requirements take place in the MTO-ORBA Structures Technical Subcommittee.
- The discussion of this item at previous meetings has effectively changed it to conducting trials of volumetric mix trucks. ORBA would like the option to use volumetric mix trucks without having to submit a change proposal. The item title was changed at the November 2025 meeting.

Discussion:

November 2023:

- Concrete supply challenges include fewer numbers of suppliers outside of the Greater Toronto Area as well as suppliers choosing to not supply concrete for MTO projects. Of 88 Concrete Ontario members, only 11 will supply MTO contracts.
- ORBA suggests the concrete specification requirements could be changed to attract more suppliers or permitting contractors to use mobile mix plants.
- MTO has not substantially changed concrete requirements from when more suppliers provided concrete and intends for specification requirements to be related to increased material durability. Volumetric mix trucks are being actively investigated and MTO will be meeting with industry soon to discuss research.
- Concrete Ontario has GPS located all 270 concrete plants and a map is available on the website. Location of supply should now be easier.

May 2024:

- Concrete Ontario does not anticipate any raw material shortages for 2024. Supply issues to MTO will be from member evaluation of risk involved with bidding on MTO contracts.
- ORBA suggests the concrete specification requirements could be changed to attract more suppliers or permitting contractors to use volumetric mixing trucks because MTO contracts are paying far above the market rate per m³ of concrete and there are few available suppliers.
- MTO is currently conducting some trials with volumetric mix trucks for non-structural concrete and has concerns with uniformity of concrete being produced

that's discharged from the truck. A second trial is being conducted with a second supplier.

September 2024:

- Concrete supply in general is down about 8%. Concrete Ontario doesn't see a foreseeable issue with the concrete supply. Steel plate for bridge girders seems to consistently have a 2–3-month delay between placing an order to getting a rolling date. Girder fabrication is generally 5-6 months and can be an issue for some new bridges.
- Volumetric mix trucks have previously been discussed but the OPSS 1350 draft provided to ORBA does not include volumetric mix trucks; ORBA would like to know if MTO is still considering trials and possibly accepting volumetric mix trucks in the future. ORBA reiterates concerns about concrete waste related to patch work, supplier reluctance to supply MTO contracts, and greenhouse gas emissions.
- MTO would still like to conduct volumetric mix truck trials for non-structural components and is looking for suitable contracts to conduct trials. Requirements for volumetric mix trucks would be by NSSP modifying OPSS 1350. MTO stresses that consideration is only for non-structural applications because MTO still has technology concerns including uniformity of mixes, challenges with cementing materials because volumetric mix trucks can't have 2 types of cementing materials, and some trucks can't mix 19mm aggregate mixes.
- Trials will ideally include exposed conditions for extended performance monitoring, so trials may take 2-3 years.

November 2024:

- Ready-mix concrete volume was down last year and is expected to be down again this year. There are not expected to be concrete shortage issues.
- Potential USA tariff implementation in January 2025 could severely impact the admixture industry and other specialty materials that are processed in the USA and other cross-border critical materials.

May 2025:

- MTO is still open to proposals to use volumetric mix trucks for specific non-structural applications such as noise wall footings. There are ongoing discussions with MTO and Concrete Ontario and equipment suppliers.

September 2025:

- Concrete Ontario would like to add some ORBA members to the liaison committee discussing volumetric mix trucks with MTO to ensure all perspectives are considered. The next meeting is next Wednesday.
- MTO remains open to proposals to use volumetric mix trucks for non-structural applications. Change proposals should already be flagged to Quality Assurance (QA) to ensure it reaches the correct MTO staff, but ORBA members may also request the Contract Administrator to contact QA/Concrete when submitting trial proposals.

November 2025:

- The title of this item is changed to better reflect the ongoing discussions since May 2024.

- MTO and Concrete Ontario recently had a meeting to discuss MTO's concerns with volumetric mix trucks. MTO remains open to proposals to use volumetric mix trucks for low-risk non-structural elements, e.g., noise wall footings, sidewalks and curb and gutter to evaluate them.

May 2026:

- An ORBA member submitted a zero-cost change proposal to conduct a volumetric mix truck trial and it was rejected. The proposal did not reach the Engineering Materials Office.
- MTO will follow-up on this proposal and re-communicate to operations staff that these proposals should be sent to the appropriate office for review. ORBA members may contact the Concrete section directly about volumetric mix truck trials.

Action Items:

- Item closed.

Sept 23-2, Concrete Spalling Issues and Acceptance Specifications

Description:

- ORBA's position is that there is no contractual requirement to resist chemical attacks nor is there any specific durability specification pertaining to salt or any other chemical. ORBA believes it is unreasonable for MTO to suggest that it is the contractor's and supplier's responsibility to make sure the concrete mix design is durable to a chemical that is not specifically identified.
- OPSS 1350.04.01.01 "The concrete mix shall be designed to provide adequate strength and durability for the intended use and to meet the requirements as specified in the Contract Documents."
- 904.08.01 also refers OPSS 1350, "Acceptance shall be according to OPSS 1350 and this specification..."

Discussion:

September 2023

- ORBA noted the issue seems to be particular to concrete barrier, sidewalk, and curb, and would like to mitigate the issue (sealers) until MTO determines the specific cause. ORBA noted the following concerns:
 - The barrier seems to only spall on the traffic face so de-icing chemicals are suspected.
 - The sole purpose of the barrier is to prevent errant vehicles from leaving the highway and MTO shouldn't refer to OPSS 904 and OPSS 1350 to extend the purpose of barrier to resist de-icing chemical attack.
 - MTO contracts do not specify what chemical will be applied and how it will react with the concrete. Concretes exposed to severe chemical attack are typically epoxy coated.
 - Concrete has passed RCP and AVS tests and many examples were built in staged construction so at least half the barrier has had sufficient time to cure.

- MTO commented that a purpose of concrete is to be durable in its environment, RCP and AVS are specified for durability, proper curing is an important factor, and sealers may not be an effective solution based on data to date.
- The specific failure mechanism needs to be determined first before any further discussion can occur.

November 2023:

- MTO and ORBA repeated their positions from the September 2023 meeting.

May 2024:

- MTO held an industry outreach meeting in February 2024. Scaling was identified in 23 cases over the past 5 years, so the issue is not as widespread as initially thought. MTO's experience is that concrete sealers do not solve the problem but just delay observation of the problem.
- MTO is continuing work on site investigations and winter maintenance practices, as well as lab testing to identify potential cause(s) and will follow up with ORBA when results of investigations are complete.
- MTO is also proceeding with a related HIIFP research project. ORBA would like to see the terms of the research proposals.
- Discussion about higher supplementary cementitious materials (SCM) content for concrete not exposed to chlorides that was also discussed at the industry outreach meeting. Any specifications changes related to SCMs will not be complete in 2024.
- ORBA suggests higher strength concrete for barriers/sidewalks and states MTQ specifies 50MPa for barriers, and that some DOT's specify sealers.

September 2024:

- MTO sent ORBA HIIFP topic 4 about research related to slag content between meetings. The topic was recently awarded to University of Toronto and should start later this month. Research will investigate different slag content and the impact of slag content on salt scaling and freeze/thaw performance.
- ORBA would have liked to see the research include higher slag percentages and investigate different de-icing chemicals. The scope of research appears to be less than discussed at the stakeholders meeting. This research proposal was issued prior to any discussion at stakeholder meetings and 2025 HIIFP proposals are due soon so future research may include additional scope.
- ORBA asks for specific de-icing chemical compositions being used and application rates from Area Maintenance Contracts (AMC).
- Draft OPSS 904 includes a clause about an approved list for concrete sealers. MTO position on sealers has not changed, they were already permitted for certain applications in the specification but did not say what sealers to use. The new clause is to notify contractors of the approved product list.

November 2024:

- MTO provided ORBA with the MTO highways maintenance program de-icing chemical information prior to the meeting.
- The awarded HIIFP project now includes some investigation of chlorides.
- Alternative approaches to barriers were discussed including 50 MPa concrete, sealers, and steel traffic barrier.
- MTO and ORBA do not agree on how to approach 2025 construction contracts. MTO's position is that each issue will be treated as a contractual issue and will be

evaluated on an individual basis. The EMO Concrete section will get involved with each dispute for consistency and to collect additional data.

May 2025:

- MTO didn't identify any issues and there were no reported issues for the 2023/2024 winter season. The 2024/2025 season is under active investigation for any potential issues. MTO is also following up with site inspection and laboratory work.
- ORBA requests de-icing chemical information – each chemical, its application volume and frequency, the concentration over the last 10 years, and the proportion of each chemical being applied (e.g., is NaCl_(s) being applied 70% of the time?). MTO will investigate volume and frequency; concentration was shared in the information for the last meeting for each region.

September 2025:

- MTO, Concrete Ontario, and ORBA reiterate previous discussion and positions.
- ORBA did not report new instances of scaling/spalling relating to disputes on MTO contracts.
- Concrete Ontario does not want to receive any information about de-icing chemicals used by MTO.
- A smaller group will be organized to discuss this particular issue elsewhere.

November 2025:

- MTO would like to clarify notes from previous meeting discussions:
 - The issue with barrier walls was primarily located in East Region in 2018, peaking in 2022 in Central and East Regions. Since then, MTO Concrete has not received any non-conformances for the 2023 or 2024 construction seasons related to scaling from either of these regions.
 - There are a couple of cases starting to develop in West Region, as well as a sidewalk in the municipality of Halton. The Halton sidewalk has been reviewed and the spalling has been attributed to workmanship. MTO wants to be informed of any specific issues of scaling from 2024 construction contracts.
 - Not all previously opened MTO investigations have been completed yet.
 - There is an ongoing trial in the Barrie area about the use of sealers to mitigate salt scaling. Field performance is still being evaluated, but preliminary lab results indicate that MTO will not permit sealers. The mass loss of concrete using two different, popular sealers was greater than the untreated concrete after 50 cycles in laboratory conditions. The results demonstrated that the issue is exacerbated with sealers and also delays observation until after contractual warranty periods. Next season will be the last for this trial area and sealer reapplication timelines are also being evaluated.
 - Review of the 2022 peak season found that 90% of the reported issues were exposed to direct liquid application of sodium chloride for winter maintenance and not other de-icers.
 - For the few situations where the cause has not been identified yet, the investigations are moving towards a materials issue that has been amplified by workmanship. This matter is of great concern to the MTO, so these investigations are proceeding carefully. As results become available, MTO will present them to ORBA and Concrete Ontario.

- ORBA asks if the recurring wetting of these faces could be part of the problem if not specifically the salt, e.g., vehicle splashing, since the back faces appear fine.
- The three factors for salt scaling are material quality, workmanship quality, and environment quality. The environmental quality is degraded by the application of sodium chloride, but this degraded environment has been present since 1938 when it was decided to apply salt to highways for traveller safety in winter. The mitigation to the salt environment was introduction of concrete air entrainment. Splashing is important and contributes to salt and water entering the concrete, but this is not new either. Since the issue peaked in 2022, it is likely another factor.
- ORBA asks if increasing the concrete strength would help, for example 50MPa mix designs.
- MTO is also investigating higher strength mixes. Theoretically the reduction in porosity should have helped but have found that it introduces different issues.
- The next winter season provides opportunities to investigate again. If any additional sites for investigation can be identified they will provide useful information.
- It was agreed at the last meeting to have a separate committee discuss this issue.

May 2026:

- ORBA reiterated their previous assertions and stated that there are municipal projects with concrete barrier walls that are scaling. ORBA noted they plan to take this issue to a different level for discussion as the technical committee discussions have not addressed ORBA's concerns.
- MTO advised that many of the points had already been addressed or explained, and that the information ORBA requested, including about de-icing chemicals, has been provided to ORBA. Additionally, there had been a workshop/meeting with supplemental explanation provided by MTO. MTO noted that there were few scaling issues on MTO contracts that were not related to known deficiencies in workmanship or material, especially in recent years. Data for 2025 construction is still being gathered.
- ORBA and Concrete Ontario stated that they were not in a position to design concrete to resist MTO's de-icing chemicals and stated that the wording in the specification must omit any reference to the concrete resisting de-icing chemicals.
- Membership has been proposed for the separate working group to discuss this item, and the first meeting is intended to take place in June.
- ORBA and Concrete Ontario advised this item will be raised for discussion at another level.

Action Items:

- Item closed.

Sept 23-3, OPSS 914 Response to TCP Comments

Description:

- Areas of disagreements to be discussed (72-hour air curing, 2-layer method, and empty kettle requirements).

Discussion:

September 2023:

- ORBA asked if it will be a unified 2-layer system on future contracts.
- It is a requirement of the July 2023 specification that is going on contracts advertised after specification implementation.
- ORBA asked for clarification about TCP comment number 3 “Also concern about the no rain or moisture on the deck for 72 hours prior to the start of the waterproofing but is that realistic given the shortened time frame to get work completed.” The response was that this has always been a requirement. ORBA believes this was about air curing. Is the moisture requirement to air cure for 72 hours, or no precipitation for 72 hours?
- MTO will have to take this back for review.
- ORBA believes the requirement to empty the kettle and start with a clean one each time is wasteful. The owner may take QA samples at any time to determine if there is burned material or if it has exceeded the acceptable limits.
- MTO understands that this requirement can lead to waste, however it is known that a strong indicator of poor waterproof performance is exceeding the time and temperature requirements. MTO is currently experiencing significant issues with waterproofing and is not currently willing to take additional risk of excessively heated waterproofing material.
- ORBA noted that the double layer application method on older contracts that do not use the July 2023 specification requiring it are taking twice as long to apply the waterproofing as anticipated. How will contractors be compensated for that?
- MTO cannot discuss payment today at the structures technical subcommittee.

November 2023:

- MTO intended to clarify the OPSS 904 requirement for 72hrs air curing prior to application of waterproofing by moving it to OPSS 914 as it was a waterproofing requirement.
- As written was not clear to ORBA. ORBA's expectation was that a concrete deck be air cured for 72hrs and then make sure it is dry before waterproofing, not preventing precipitation for 72hrs.

May 2024:

- MTO internally reviewed concerns brought up at the last meeting and does not believe the 72hr requirement is an issue for contracts or contract administration as it has been a specification requirement for a long time. Where there is a contract specific issue, change proposals may be submitted.
- ORBA agrees that it has been a requirement for a long time that a concrete deck be dry before applying waterproofing membrane but disagrees with the MTO's position that the addition of “with no exposure to precipitation or water” to 914.07.03 of OPSS 914, July 2023 is not a substantial change.

September 2024:

- There is a discussion about water/moisture and the waterproofing pinhole/bubbling issue previously discussed. The pinhole/bubbling is still occurring but less frequently and industry is more aware of it. There is concern that moisture may

contribute to the issue, but excessive moisture has other impacts, including on adhesion, so the 72hr requirement is not only about pinholing.

- If moisture is an MTO concern, is there an avenue of being more prescriptive about how to prepare the deck surface prior to waterproofing instead of the 72hr requirement?
- ORBA notes previously discussed concerns about the clean kettle requirement which results in more idle time and material waste.
- MTO issued HIIFP research topic 5 about waterproofing to investigate deck drying, moisture content and tools to measure moisture content.

November 2024:

- MTO included additional language to the specification stating contractors may submit a proposal for remedial action if precipitation occurs during the 72hr air-curing period. ORBA does not agree that this is a practical solution which leaves decisions too open to contract administrator interpretation, and questions how widespread of an issue poor waterproofing bond is because of past application practices.
- MTO states that visual assessment of dryness of concrete is not an appropriate measure; saturated surface dry condition may have too much moisture for waterproof membrane application. Research is ongoing into several testing devices and field testing will be conducted. The specifications will be updated, as appropriate, when research work is completed.

May 2025:

- Various moisture testers have been purchased to be tested in the laboratory and the field this construction season. MTO is continuing to monitor HIIFP research for ways of assessing drying of the concrete deck and will follow-up when it is complete.
- ORBA and MTO do not agree on the need for the specification requirement that the kettle be empty when it arrives on site before adding and heating waterproofing material. MTO requests ORBA provide something in writing for review.

September 2025:

- MTO and ORBA reiterate previous meeting points.
- University research continues and MTO is supplementing that research with readings by various moisture meter instruments/technologies in the field this season.
- MTO is open to attend waterproofing projects to collect additional data where feasible, and to test various moisture meters.
- The use of the double layer waterproofing application method with membrane continues to be specified in all contracts to help mitigate the bubbling issue.

November 2025:

- MTO has tested different moisture meters all year in the field. Equipment is now with the university for additional lab work which will take place over winter.
- ORBA notes that moisture in concrete is one issue being discussed, but adding waterproofing material to the kettle on site is another issue that is not. ORBA does not find the current requirements workable.
- MTO updated specification language after receiving comments. The specification permits proposals to be submitted for consideration when the 72 hour air drying

requirement may not be met; some proposals have been received from contractors and reviewed on individual contracts.

- ORBA notes potential inconsistencies between OPSS 904 and OPSS 914 with respect to proposals.

May 2026:

- ORBA re-iterated points from previous meetings and MTO responded with clarifications and explanations consistent with previous responses.
- ORBA does not want to remove leftover material in the kettle, start with an empty kettle, nor wait until the contractor is at site prior to starting the kettle. MTO clarified that the kettle heating can be started earlier, offsite, as long as the contract administrator is notified prior.
- ORBA advised this item will be raised for discussion at another level.
- ORBA members have been very accommodating with MTO conducting trials of moisture testing equipment last season. Additional trials will be conducted this season and MTO requests ORBA's continued support.
- Work is ongoing with Carleton University and additional data is required, but a shortlist of equipment is being prepared. An equipment list and test method may be available by the end of the year.

Action Items:

- MTO will continue data collection this construction season.

May 23-3, Foundation Information Reports

Description:

- ORBA would like MTO to provide the FIDR in contract documents.

Discussion:

May 2023:

- ORBA requested to include the recommendations section of the FIR with tender documents. Some other DOTs provide the description of the soils as well as the recommendations.
- MTO will review what subsoil investigation information is provided with tender documents.

September 2023:

- Inclusion of FIDR's in ContractsSept82023 PowerPoint slides (attached).
- MTO current state of practice is not to include the FIDR in Design Bid Build contracts. In Design Build contracts it is included with a letter of reliance. The information is available in the GEOCRE system, but it is not included in the contract documents.
- MTO's jurisdiction scan shows that most jurisdictions are also not supplying the FIDR. There are owner risks to supplying the FIDR and it is not produced to be a contract document.
- ORBA noted safety concerns of not being provided information, such as base heave.

- MTO has additional mechanisms in place to communicate safety information in a contract without supplying a FIDR.

November 2023:

- MTO work on this item has not started yet, there is no update for this meeting.

May 2024:

- MTO will try to have an update on this item for the next meeting.

September 2024:

- MTO has started a jurisdictional scan, but nothing has been finalized yet and an internal meeting is scheduled with the Contract Management Office to discuss the risks of releasing this information. There are no major updates.

November 2024:

- MTO has completed its jurisdictional scan of FIDR inclusion and is now proceeding with the process for new policy development.
- Engineering service providers are concerned that FIDR are produced at a certain point in time with certain assumptions and things can evolve and change over time between production of the FIDR and completion of a construction contract package. This may have the potential to identify inconsistencies for claims or liabilities and needs further discussion between MTO and engineering service providers.

May 2025:

- MTO is reviewing what and how FIDR information can be provided to contractors. There is currently no change, but updates will be provided when they're available.

September 2025:

- MTO has completed a second, more fulsome jurisdictional scan and is proceeding with discussions with internal and external design engineers to hear their potential feedback.

November 2025:

- MTO is continuing discussions with stakeholders but has no updates for this meeting.

May 2026:

- ORBA believes full reports are now being provided.

Action Items:

- Close item.

New Items

Nov 22-1, Safety Talk

Description:

- It was agreed at the May 2022 meeting that this would be a recurring item to promote safety culture. MTO and ORBA are both free to propose their own safety talk items.
- ORBA and MTO will alternate who is responsible for the safety talk at each meeting.

Discussion:

- MTO presented today's safety talk about ticks.

- Ticks are increasingly present in areas where they were not previously common, and with a high prevalence of Lyme disease. Exposure to ticks can occur easily, especially in long grass along the side of highways, and through pets. Blacklegged ticks (deer ticks) are a primary carrier of Lyme disease and can be very small (as small as ~2mm when young), making them hard to detect.
- Prevention is key: wear light coloured clothing, long sleeves and pants. Tuck pant legs into socks and perform thorough tick checks after potential exposure. Since Lyme disease transmission typically requires about 24 hours of attachment, early detection and removal significantly reduces risk.
- If a tick has been attached for 24 hours or more, seek medical attention. Pharmacists or doctors can provide prophylactic antibiotics. Use proper tick removal tools and avoid crushing ticks.

Action Items:

- None.

May 26-1, Consultation Process

Description:

ORBA has concerns with the MTO Technical Consultation Portal (TCP) process for specification revision/review and requests. ORBA subcommittee members would like to undertake pre-publication reviews similar to the process pre-TCP.

Discussion:

- ORBA noted that it has a number of committees with the MTO with the purpose of resolving issues related to construction, and believes it is better to have the discussions about construction standard changes prior to posting them to the TCP.
- MTO receives valuable feedback from the construction industry through these committees and discussions and will continue to consult ORBA. However, MTO will not be making changes to its current consultation process. The TCP is important for the MTO because it marks the start of the official consultation timeline and is open to the public so any Ontarian may offer their feedback, and not all MTO stakeholders are also ORBA members. While the MTO considers all feedback, not all feedback will necessarily be addressed to the satisfaction of every commenter.
- A typical overview of the process was provided:
 - MTO generally engages stakeholders during document drafting, prior to posting to the TCP. This may include thorough discussion at the committee level.
 - Posting on the TCP is normally 28 days. Emails are typically sent to stakeholders (including ORBA) when there is a TCP posting.
 - Once the TCP posting closes, MTO reviews all feedback received and publishes the comments and responses to comments for that posting. Depending on the feedback received, the posted document may proceed to publication, proceed to publication with amendments, or be posted to TCP for another consultation after substantive edits. The MTO may also choose to have further consultation with stakeholders based on the TCP feedback.

- Additional information or meetings may be requested by MTO or commenters at any point (before, during or after the TCP posting).

Action Items:

- Item closed.

May 26-2, Reinforcing Steel SSP 109S62

Description:

ORBA is seeking information about the consultation for this special provision and its implementation timeline.

Discussion:

- MTO completed a full internal and external consultation for this special provision. Meetings were held with members of the CPCI, OCPA and RSIC. The draft was then posted to the Technical Consultation Portal for an appropriate period of time to solicit feedback. Based on meetings and discussions, another amendment to 905.07.02.03 Fastening was added.
- The specification may be posted to TCP again for the fastening amendment. The specification will likely be published in July.

Action Items:

- Item closed.

May 26-3, Procurement / Canadian Content Requirements

Description:

ORBA requested clarification on the Buy Ontario and supply Canadian requirements and how they will be implemented.

Discussion:

- Following the *Buy Ontario Act*, a Buy Ontario procurement directive came into effect on April 13, 2026. The directive incorporates some older initiatives like the Building Ontario Businesses Initiative (BOBI) and procurement restriction policy on USA businesses, in response to USA tariffs, into a single directive.
- Buy Ontario capital infrastructure requires government entities to include a list of each major good and service required for the deliverables being procured, a requirement for vendors to submit a domestic supply chain plan that identifies at least the source of each of the listed major goods and services, and to select a domestic supply chain model.
- MTO chose to meet this requirement as a domestic supply chain commitment, where a contractor declares that at least 51% of their bid's total project goods and services value is Canadian.
- The declaration will be accompanied by a domestic supply chain plan. The supply chain plan will be regularly reviewed with the contract administrator and kept up to date during the work. Changes to the plan are acceptable; the requirement of MTO

interest is ensuring at least 51% of the total project goods and services value is Canadian.

- ORBA will recirculate their Buy Ontario bulletin with information about the requirements.

Action Items:

- MTO will share the presentation slides after the meeting.
- ORBA will recirculate their bulletin.
- Item closed.

May 26-4, Tariffs

Description:

- ORBA requested clarification on the tariff relief special provision.

Discussion:

- MTO's special provision about tariffs has been active for nearly eight months with no changes. ORBA's understanding of the document is correct, MTO will provide relief for the proven and substantiated incremental changes to the cost of material incorporated into the work, for:
 - New tariff and/or change in tariff occurring no greater than 2 days prior to the date of tender closing; and,
 - New tariff and/or change in tariff occurring during the contract.
- ORBA has concerns about the 'proven and substantiated' part of the specification because it may be difficult to demonstrate. Components of work often have sub-components which could be affected by tariffs but not visible in pricing for the component, e.g. the component price goes up without an explanation of a particular sub-component price increase, or a tariff line item added to an invoice.
- MTO will review any contractor requests for compensation on a case-by-case basis. It is recommended that excellent documentation be kept to prove what a contractor reasonably believed would be the price of an item at the time of bidding.

Action Items:

- Item closed.

May 26-5, Tender Item Quantity Accuracy

Description:

- There are occasionally significant discrepancies between estimated and actual tender item quantities. ORBA seeks clarification on how to seek compensation for impacts to contractors.

Discussion:

- There are regularly differences in the estimated tender item quantity from actual quantity. ORBA's concern is for the instances where a change with respect to tender quantity is enough to affect the schedule or item price such that it is no longer reflective of the bid, and how to address the change as compensation and/or time.

- The General Conditions of Contract has mechanisms for addressing additions, changes and variations in tender quantities. The contractor should submit a compensation request when it is believed that the pricing is no longer reflective of the item quantity.
- If ORBA members are not finding the mechanisms of the general conditions are adequate, on a regular basis, then that should be brought up at one of these committees for discussion with MTO.

Action Items:

- Item closed.

Information Shared for this Meeting

Documents Shared by ORBA

None.

Documents Shared by MTO

- Concrete Finishing.pptx
- Buy Ontario slides for 2026 Spring Updates.pptx

Next Meeting

- September 3, 2026 – MTO to host.
- November 26, 2026 – ORBA to host.