

ORBA - MTO Highway Maintenance Committee Meeting Notes

Date: Tuesday, April 14th, 2026

Time: 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Location: In-person, MTO CETI Building, 95 Arrow Road, North York

Attendee	Organization	Attendee	Organization
Doug Wipperman	The Miller Group	~~Walid Abou Hamde~~	ORBA
James Stracey	Emcon Services Inc.	Steven Crombie	ORBA
Frank Rizzardo	Emcon Services Inc.	Alexis Del Rosario	ORBA
Connor Quinless	Fowler Construction	~~Jason Ranger~~	MTO
~~John McBride~~	Fowler Construction	Andrew Alkins	MTO
Thelep Ampalavanar	Webber Infrastructure	James Hamilton	MTO
~~Abdallah Tannoukhi~~	Webber Infrastructure	~~Nedim Oren~~	MTO
~~Greg Ehman~~	Ledcor	Michael Sleeth	MTO
~~Matt Granger~~	Ledcor	Amalia Ray-McIntyre	MTO
~~Ashley Cate~~	Ledcor	Valérie Labbé	MTO
Ryan Coté	Shwe Miikaan Miller	Brian Utigard	MTO
Rudy Giasson	Ledcor	Neil Pawluk	MTO
Tom Enright	Bonnechere Excavating Inc.		

Note: Strikethrough in the above table = did not attend the meeting.

1. PREVIOUS MEETING NOTES / ANNOUNCEMENTS
a) New MTO representative introduced. b) Previous meeting notes (shared March 9, 2026) reviewed and accepted by all.
2. PRESENTATIONS
a) 11:00AM - Environmentally Friendly De-icing Salts (Carleton University)
3. STANDING ITEMS
a) MTO Applications Update / WOR Sub-WG: • No update; meeting pending. b) Winter Materials Sub-WG: • Initial meeting held; focus on reconciliation issues. • Bi-weekly reconciliation under review. • Potential LiDAR use in domes to be presented. • Salt-related decision items to be directed to Winter Operations group. ACTION ITEM: MTO to coordinate LiDAR overview. c) Operators Sub-WG: i. IMOS: • Ongoing challenges in Northern regions; long winters strain staffing. • Current staffing ratios insufficient; limited availability of qualified operators. • Gap between licensing and actual plow experience. • Regional labour competition (e.g., forestry/mining) impacting recruitment. • Wage levels may need review. ii. Emcon: • Improved year-over-year, but Northern challenges persist.

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- Aging workforce; limited new entrants.
- Fair Wage helpful but needs flexibility.

iii. **Fowler:**

- Labour shortages continue in the North.
- Guaranteed hours model ineffective; preference for driving-only roles.
- Limited workforce availability.

iv. **Webber:**

- Adequate numbers but quality concerns (engagement, ownership).
- Resistance to non-driving duties.
- “Fit for duty” considerations emerging.

v. **Ledcor:**

- Operator fatigue due to extended demand.
- Supervisory capacity reduced as leads required in trucks.
- Licensing/training costs remain high.

vi. **Shwe Miikaan:**

- Recommend indexing Fair Wage to CPI.

vii. **General Observations (MTO/Industry):**

- Persistent labour shortages in Northern regions.
- Limited labour pool and competition from other sectors.
- Need for long-term workforce planning and demographic analysis.
- Fair Wage program requires review and potential enhancements.

ACTION ITEMS:

• **ORBA:**

- Conduct demographic analysis (by contract area; union vs non-union).

• **MTO:**

- Review Fair Wage framework, (including indexing and flexibility).

d) Facilities & Equipment Sub-WG:

i. **Discussion**

- Provincial facility condition assessments underway.
- Equipment guidelines shared.
- Request to allow maintenance activities in patrol yards.

ACTION ITEM: MTO: Review patrol yard restrictions and alignment with guidelines.

e) Winter Operations Sub-WG:

i. **Discussion:**

- Ongoing working group discussions.
- Items to be brought forward next meeting.
- Clarification needed on handling delayed responses.

ACTION ITEM: Sub-working Group leads are to escalate to executive when items go unanswered.

f) Summer Operations Sub-WG:

i. **Discussion:**

- Meeting postponed pending Industry input.

ACTION ITEM: Industry to provide feedback to support next meeting.

g) Procurement update:

i. **Discussion:**

- Contract extensions being pursued.
- Information cannot be shared until finalized.

4. NEW BUSINESS

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a) Salt Supply & Management:

i. IMOS:

- Shortages; no carryover inventory.
- Suppliers not stockpiling for next season.
- Concern over supply reliability vs U.S. demand.
- Reconciliation needed to refill domes.

ii. Emcon:

- Similar shortages; sourcing out-of-province.
- Support strategic stockpiling.

iii. Fowler:

- Supply issues experienced.
- Pre-season stockpile beneficial.
- Concern with production capacity.

iv. Webber:

- Prefer local sourcing first.
- Risk of damaging supplier relationships with external sourcing.
- Noted export of local supply.
- Suggest review of supply guarantees.

v. Ledcor:

- Limited storage capacity restricts stockpiling.

vi. General (MTO/Industry):

- Strategic stockpiles to be explored.
- Alternative sourcing to be considered cautiously.
- Maximize dome capacity; reassess end-of-season reductions.
- Northern storage capacity insufficient.
- Potential advance payment model for materials.
- Review inventory carryover thresholds.

ACTION ITEMS:

- **MTO:**
 - **Assess dome capacity utilization and northern storage needs**
 - **Explore advance payment pilot.**
- **ORBA/Industry:**
 - **Provide input on stockpiling strategy and supply risks.**

b) Litter Pickup update:

i. Discussion (MTO presentation):

- No bids received (Toronto); likely due to low value/visibility.
- Opportunity to explore mechanical methods.

ACTION ITEM: MTO to engage industry on alternative deliver/mechanical options.

c) Benchmark Hours update:

i. Discussion (MTO presentation):

- Options under refinement.
- Need to recognize committed labour and equipment costs.
- Aim for balanced outcome.

ACTION ITEM: MTO to share refined options with Industry for discussion.

ORBA ITEMS:

d) Winter Salt Application Practices:

i. Discussion:

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- Concern regarding expectation to salt every plowing cycle.
- Confirmed this is not MTO direction.
- Dedicated spreader requirements are under review.

ACTION ITEM: MTO to reinforce direction through training; review spreader requirements.

e) Roles & Communication During Active Operations:

i. Discussion:

- Inconsistent contract administration practices.
- Instances of operational direction to contractors.

ACTION ITEM: MTO to address through training and communication improvements.

f) Non-Compliance – Process and Documentation:

i. Discussion:

- Limited detail and lack of pre-communication identified.
- Need for clear documentation.

ACTION ITEM: MTO to reinforce documentation expectations in training.

g) Environmental Fees:

i. Discussion:

- Increased disposal costs due to legislative changes.
- Escalation mechanisms exist but require supporting data.

ACTION ITEMS:

- **Industry: Provide cost evidence where applicable.**
- **MTO: Review through existing contract provisions.**

h) Soil Disposal Requirements & Cost:

i. See previous item.

i) Unplanned Closures & Traffic Control Expectations:

i. Discussion:

- Challenges meeting Book 7 requirements during emergencies.
- Need clear transition process to planned closures.

ACTION ITEM: MTO to review via MSS 1006 Sub-working Group; consider future updates.

5. ROUNDTABLE

a) Industry (Ledcor):

- Request for clarification on NSC (hours-of-service) exemptions; enforcement indicates contractors are not considered emergency services.

b) MTO:

- Determination of exemptions is not controlled by MTO.
- Contracts require compliance with legislation; any exceedances must be communicated with mitigation plans.
- “Imminent emergency” may apply during active events but cannot be used for planned non-compliance.

c) Industry (General):

- Confirmation that winter maintenance (plowing) is considered an essential service.

d) MTO:

- Reminder to address post-winter litter and initiate spring cleanup.
- Contractors to engage with contract administrators where scope clarification is needed.

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DATE	OPEN ACTION ITEMS	ACTION BY
Jan-2024-01	TIME & MATERIAL (ORBA) <i>Description:</i> Time & Material vs Lump Sum for Change Orders. <i>Discussion:</i> ORBA requesting a workshop with MTO to review the use of T&M which has become more commonly used for change order work. Methods used are not consistent across the province and industry would like a more standardized approach. Industry to provide examples to MTO for improper use of Risk Mitigation as well as frequent use of T&M. Action: Keep item open.	ORBA
Apr-2025-01	REGULATIONS AMENDING THE PASSENGER AUTOMOBILE AND LIGHT TRUCK GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION REGULATIONS OF THE CANADIAN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT (ORBA) <i>Description:</i> Upcoming changes to legislation could affect equipment costs and contract mobilizations. <i>Discussion:</i> Industry requests that maintenance equipment, specifically Winter maintenance equipment, is exempt from this legislation. Note: The proposed changes may or may not be implemented due to the economic unrest related to tariffs being imposed by the US. Industry to collect & provide statistics/risks on how the regulation is affecting industry. MTO to continually monitor this issue. Action: Keep item open.	ORBA & MTO

Next Meeting: May 11th, 2026

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 PM

Meeting Notes Prepared by: Valérie Labbé