

Central Region Closure & Right-of-Way Usage Notification Protocol V 3.0

PH-OD-002

Roadwork Scheduling & Coordination Unit (RWSCU)

Ministry of Transportation – Central Region

Traveller Communication Office

RWSCU@Ontario.ca

PREFACE

Ontario's highways are among the busiest in Canada, serving as essential corridors for the movement of people and goods throughout the province. Roadwork and other lane closure activities, can significantly reduce highway capacity, leading to heavy congestion and delays for travellers. These impacts are particularly amplified in high-traffic areas such as the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), where even minor disruptions can cause substantial delays.

Managing lane and ramp closures due to construction, maintenance, encroachment, and other traffic works on highways throughout Central Region is a complex task. To meet Ministry standards, The Central Region Closure & Right-of-Way Usage Notification Protocol v3.0 has been established by the Roadwork Scheduling & Coordination Unit (RWSCU) to ensure all roadwork activities maintain traffic flow, minimize disruptions to the general public, and ensure safety for all users.

The Road Work Scheduling and Coordination Unit only accepts notifications through its online system. The online system can be accessed via www.mtorss.ca.

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INTRODUCTION

The Central Region Closure and Right-of-Way Usage Notification Protocol, hereafter referred to as the “**Protocol**”, was developed to address several important areas:

Efficiency

The protocol improves the efficiency of highway operations by:

- Ensuring that the concept of traffic flow management forms an integral part of all highway operations – scheduled or unscheduled – for work on construction, maintenance, engineering, emergency response, or special event.
- Coordinating roadwork and special events to minimize or avoid conflicts; and by
- Allowing information about all scheduled roadwork to be gathered and shared in advance with all highway users. This permits other highway roadwork groups to adjust/modify work schedules to take advantage of shared closure opportunities.

Notification

The protocol allows roadway event information to be shared sufficiently in advance with:

- The general public, business, and the media, so that they can plan alternate routes.
- External partners including police, fire, emergency medical services, municipalities, special event planners, and interested groups. This helps to foster mutual participation, cooperation, and involvement; and
- Ministry staff as it relates to the usage of the highway right-of-way.
- Ontario 511. All lane and ramp roadwork notifications which are submitted and approved in RSS can be viewed on Ontario 511 (<https://511on.ca>), under the “current” & “future” roadwork layer.

Safety

The protocol improves highway safety by:

- Identifying conflicts between various proposed highway operations in advance.
- Providing the general public, business, and the media with information about scheduled and unscheduled work. This information contributes to a reduction in traffic volumes and driver frustration.

Quality Assurance

The protocol provides for a quality assurance by:

- Allowing ministry staff to monitor adherence to contract special provisions and approved closure times.

PROTOCOL OVERVIEW

Applicability

The Protocol is to be adhered to by all Requestors.

Activities Covered

The following activities are covered in the Protocol:

- The closure of any **shoulder, lane, or ramp** within Central Region.
- **Working on the right-of-way** within Central Region (including situations without a shoulder, lane, or ramp closure) by any Requestors.
 - The only exceptions are:
 - Requestors working within a designated construction zone behind barriers.

Instructions

Instructions on the use and administration of the Protocol are provided in the following sections and Appendices:

- **Section 2 – General Process**
 - This provides general details to guide all Requestors on how to apply for a Closure Notification or a Right-Of-Way (ROW) Usage Notification and all Requestors are required to be familiar with this section.

- **Appendices**

The appendices consist of 2 sections:

A: Contact and Reference Information

B: Definitions

GENERAL PROCESS: OVERVIEW

Prior to commencing any activity on the roadway, a requestor must complete a Notification and be approved for the work they plan to complete. The Requestor is responsible for correctly completing the Notification.

The process of all Notifications is as follows:

Preliminary Step: Project Initiation

Step 1: Accessing RSS & Creating an Account

Step 2: Contract Profile(s)

Step 3: Notification Submission

Step 4: Implementation

PRELIMINARY STEP: PROJECT INITIATION

At the start of any contract or major work activity, many Requestors conduct a pre-work, pre-start, or kick-off meeting. If such a meeting is held, all documents containing closure times, locations, restrictions, and amendments should be emailed to RWSCU@ontario.ca, to ensure approval is received, upon submitting a notification.

STEP 1: ACCESSING RSS & CREATING AN ACCOUNT

Before submitting a notification online, the requestor must create a valid username & account to get into the Roadwork Scheduling System (<https://mtorss.ca/RssWeb>). Once an account has created, the user shall email RWSCU@ontario.ca to let staff know that their account has been created. For security reasons, each user account will be reviewed before being granted access to the system. This review can take up to 1 business day. A user account is required to create a contract profile to submit notifications.

STEP 2: CONTRACT PROFILE(S)

Once the user has been granted access and logs into RSS for the first time, they should first go to the “User Account” page to ensure that the contract they wish to submit notifications for appears on the list of active contracts. The list of available contracts is located on the bottom portion of the screen, and all contracts are sorted alphabetically.

If the desired contract is available in this list, users shall select that contract, as it will appear in the right-hand column “Requested/Assigned”.

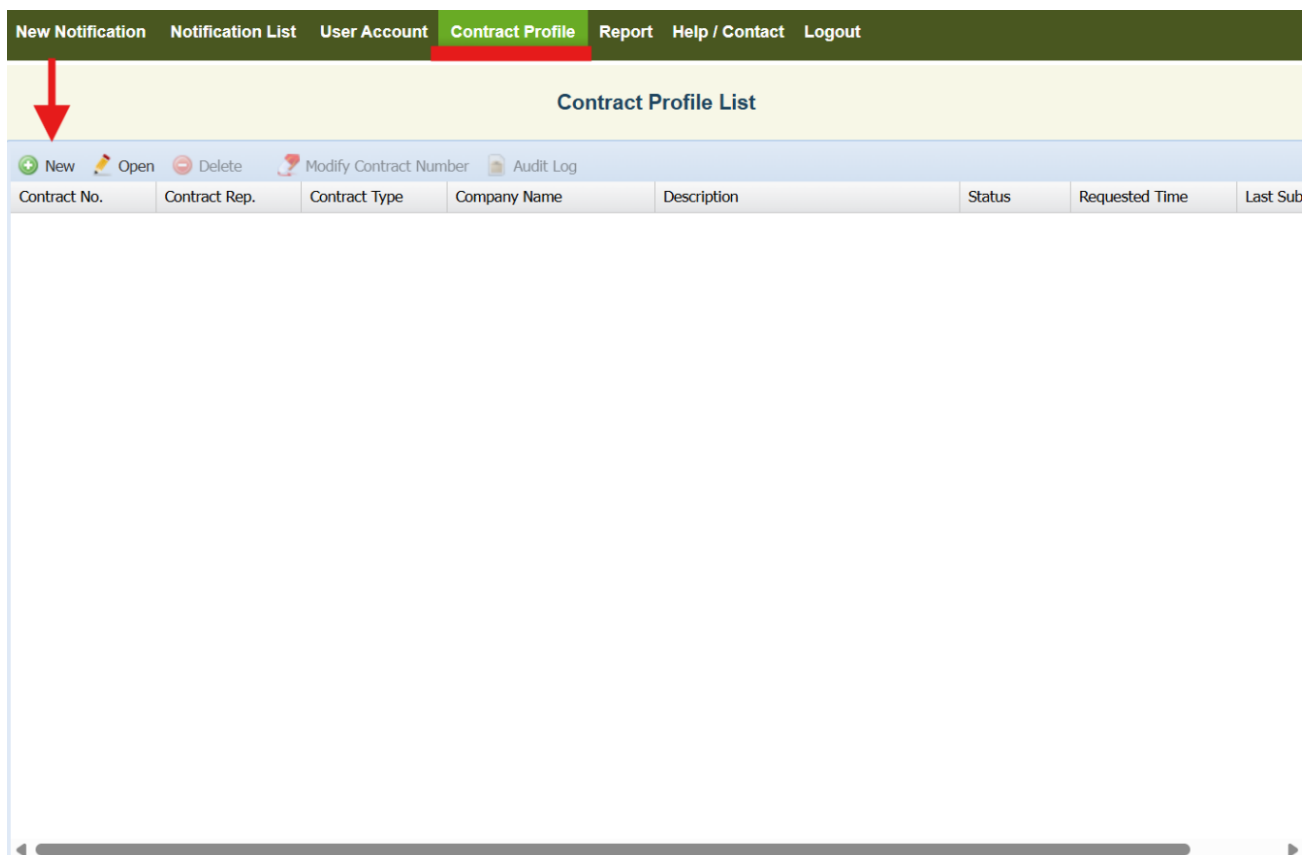
Once this has been done, the user shall click “submit” and email RWSCU@ontario.ca, alerting them of the request. For security reasons, each contract profile request will be reviewed, and can take up to one (1) business day.

Once approval has been given by RWSCU staff, users can now submit notifications under that contract profile.

If the contract number is not available in the list for request, the user shall follow the process below.

Creating a New Contract in RSS

In order to create a new contract in RSS, the requestor must add the new contract to their user profile. The requestor can do this in the “Contract Profile” section by selecting the “New” button from the contract profile list and begin the process.



Once the user has selected “New”, all required fields should be completed and accurate. For the “Contract No”, the user shall enter the legally binding contract number that was issued on the contract/permit.

Please ensure that the “MTO Representative” is a current Ministry employee. This same name can be used for the CA & CSA field if the contract does not have a Contract Administrator.

The “Additional Email Addresses” field shall include any relevant stakeholders to the contract, that should be informed of approvals and cancellations to notifications.

The user must outline the work area boundaries for the contract by specifying all relevant highways (both Highway directions if applicable) and identifying the start and end points for each highway.

Once the contract profile has been completed, the user shall click submit, and send an email to RWSCU@ontario.ca, alerting them of the request. The email shall also include the original copy of the contract/permit, including all relevant contract details and closure times.

For security reasons, each contract profile request will be reviewed, and can take up to 1 business day.

Once RWSCU staff have approved the contract profile, the user will need to request access to the contract profile. Please follow the process outline under “**Requesting Access to an existing Contract**” to complete this step.

STEP 3: NOTIFICATION SUBMISSION

To meet the need for timely communication to the public, media, emergency service providers and other agencies, completed Notifications must be **submitted by 8:30 a.m., a minimum of two business days** in advance of the work.

Early submission is encouraged for coordination purposes, preferably a week in advance.

- **Late Notifications:** Notifications that arrive **less than two full business days** before the start of work may **NOT** be accepted. A denial (**not** allowing work to begin) will be emailed to the Requestor within one business day of receiving the late notification.
- **Incomplete Notifications:** Notifications with minor deficiencies, such as having no description of the work or no approval attachment for out of contract limits request, will require further clarification from the Requestor a **minimum of one full business day** prior to the start of work. Requestors with Notifications containing major deficiencies will be issued a denial.
- **Revisions:** These are defined as minor modifications to the information/conditions stated on the Notification. This would mean items such as extending (or shortening) the length of the construction zone; lane/shoulder closure time changes within the scope of the permitted work times; a reduction in the number of lane closures; additional closure information; or clarifications requested from RWSCU. All are acceptable with a minimum of **one full business day's** notice. This also means no known coordination issues can be outstanding.

- **Long-term & major closures:** For closures that meet the criteria below, RWSCU should be notified via RSS at least 5 business days in advance:
 - Full collectors or highway closure
 - Full freeway to freeway ramp closure (I.e. Hwy 401 EB to Hwy 400 NB)
 - Long duration closure (greater than 24 hours)
- RWSCU should be notified of any prior arrangements, and any adjustments to the long-term closure.

Following submission of the completed notification one of the following will occur within two business days of the notification submission:

- The Notification will have been **APPROVED** allowing Requestors to proceed. An email would be sent to the email addresses associated with the contract informing them that the notification has been approved.
- The Notification will have been **RETURNED** for further clarification. An email would be sent to the email addresses associated with the contract informing them that the notification requires further clarification. Following receipt of a resubmission with adequate clarification, the notification will be reviewed again.
- The Notification will have been **DENIED** preventing the Requestor from proceeding. An email would be sent to the email addresses associated with the contract informing them that the notification has been denied and stating the reasons for the denial.

Below are some important notes to keep in mind while completing a notification.

Location/Description

- Requestors should include only one location per notification. For mainline lane closures, additional impacts such as ramps or transfers can be combined at the same location. For complicated activities involving many areas of work in more than one direction or stream of traffic (i.e. express / collector), submit separate notifications for each direction and each stream. One notification is sufficient for identical closures occurring on consecutive days, nights, so if the location remains the same.
- Remember to clearly identify if the work is for the entire length requested or if different portions of the road are required at different times.

Dates and Times

- Always include the closing and opening dates and times in 24-hour format. The times must correspond to the point in time when the lane, shoulder or ramp is closed with the placement of the first barrel or concrete barrier and when it will be re-opened, which is, when the last barrel or concrete barrier will be removed. Submitted times for a notification must be in adherence to times outlined within the contract.
- All submissions shall be in the case of ROW use. The times must correspond with the arrival and departure of on-site personnel and equipment.
- If the closure is to occur on consecutive days or nights, check off “recurring” under the “Basic Information” section of the Notification and include additional specific schedule date information in the later sections of the notification.

Work Description

- A brief description of the work must be included so that RWSCU is able to evaluate, assess and potentially prioritize this work with other work that may be occurring in the area. Further detail may be provided if necessary to facilitate the understanding of the closure or ROW.

Closure Time Verification

- The Requestor must confirm that they are adhering to the closure times and location stated in their ministry agreement or their ministry representative discussions. If a modification has been made to the closure times, then the Requestor must specify the name of the MTO representative that agreed to this change and attach proof of approval. This can be done via email (RWSCU@ontario.ca) or by attaching a PDF document through the attachment section in RSS. Notifications which include out of contract closure times will be issued a denial without explicit approval from the appropriate MTO staff or Contract Administrator.

STEP 4: IMPLEMENTATION

Role of Central Region COMPASS Traffic Management Centre (CRCTMC)

- CRCTMC plays a vital role in managing traffic flow and safety on major highways throughout the Greater Toronto area, and within Central region. Using a network of cameras, sensors, variable message signs and other ITS equipment, COMPASS monitors real-time traffic conditions, coordinates responses to incidents with emergency services, and provides timely information to the public. COMPASS strives to reduce congestion, enhance road safety, and ensure efficient movement of people and goods across Ontario’s busiest transportation corridors.

Call in when the work begins.

- Prior to a lane, or right-of-way closure, the Requestor must call the Central Region COMPASS Traffic Management Centre (CRCTMC) at 416-327-8373 **10 minutes** prior to the *set-up of traffic control devices* to report the start of this closure.

Call in changes in work.

- Anytime there is a change in the travel lanes, such as a shift from left to right side or the closing of a second lane (or adding a ramp closure), the Requestor must call the Central Region COMPASS Traffic Management Centre promptly to advise them of the change.
- If there are any unexpected changes during the work, such as an equipment breakdown that will delay opening, the Requestor must also call the Central Region COMPASS Traffic Management Centre promptly to advise them of the change.

Call in when the work is completed.

- Call the Central Region COMPASS Traffic Management Centre when the lane(s) are fully opened, or for any partial reopening (partial lanes or ramps).

Cancellation of work

- If scheduled work is going to be cancelled, the Notification must be cancelled in the Notification List of the Roadwork Scheduling System before 17:00 in advance of the work.
- The system allows requestors to cancel just one day for rain or the entire event if the work is completed.
- If work is cancelled after 17:00 or within one hour of the start time, the Requestor must first cancel their notification within RSS, then call the Central Region COMPASS Traffic Management Centre to advise them.
- If the cancelled closure is re-scheduled to a new date, a new Notification can be completed, or a revision made to the previous notification.

EMERGENCY CLOSURES

Emergency means many things to many people. While the word conveys a sense of urgency and immediacy, it also requires defining in the context of notification issuance. This definition is introduced to ensure all Requestors have an equal understanding as to what constitutes an “emergency”-based event on any one of the Central Region’s highways.

Emergency Closures:

- A closure required to address the imminent need for work to ensure public safety.
 - Imminent meaning, “less than 12 hours between the time that the work is identified and the time when the actual work is to begin on the highway.”
 - Emergency Notifications will receive the highest priority for processing. All other Notification requests that lie within the proximity of the work will be examined and denied if they cannot be coordinated with the emergency work.
 - Emergency lane and ramp closure information should be sent to RWSCU using the Roadwork Scheduling System (www.mtorss.ca) with the word “EMERGENCY” in the Work Description field and indicate the reason. Emergencies must conform to this definition. Emergency applications will be tracked, and the information shared with ministry agreement administrators and the applicable ministry offices.
 - An email to RWSCU@ontario.ca, containing details of the emergency closure will expedite processing time.
 - If the need for an emergency closure arises outside of normal RWSCU office hours, the Requestor shall call the Central Region COMPASS Traffic Management Centre (CRCTMC) directly at 416-327-8373 and explain the circumstances.

APPENDIX “A”

CONTACT AND REFERENCE INFORMATION

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Roadwork Scheduling Office:

Email: RWSCU@Ontario.ca

Central Region COMPASS Traffic Management Centre (CRCTMC):

Email: CRCTMC@Ontario.ca

Phone Number: **416-327-8373**

APPENDIX “B”

Definitions

Agreement Administrator: The general term applied to the MTO representative who takes care of the contracts and agreements with contractors and consultants.

Appropriate Traffic representative: This will be a member of the Central Region Traffic Office chosen to represent the office.

Central Region COMPASS Traffic Management Centre (CRCTMC): Monitors the operations of the Central Region highway system (see contact information).

Conflicts: Adjacent work or events on a highway those are close enough in location and time to cause operational problems for the highway event and the work in question.

Coordination: The effort given to ensure adjacent work or events can proceed with minimal problems.

Emergency closures: A closure required to address the imminent need for work required to ensure public safety.

Highway users: All groups that have a user interest in the highways.

Imminent: Less than 12 hours between the time that the work is identified and that time when the work actually begins on the highway.

Long-term closures: Work activity that requires construction stage changes or lane closures longer than 24 hours in duration.

Major stakeholders: MTO offices that provide input into the Protocol process.

Notification denials: An email that will be sent to Requestors indicating their notification has not been approved; therefore, their work cannot proceed.

Notification revisions: These are defined as minor modifications to the information/conditions stated on the originally approved Notification. This would mean items such as: extending (or shortening) the length of the construction zone, time changes within the scope of the permitted work times, a reduction in the number of lane closures, additional closure information or clarifications requested from RWSCU.

Requestors: The individuals or entities that place a Notification with RWSCU.

Requestor's agreement: A general term used to describe either the contract entered into by the Requestor with MTO or the written agreements struck with the Traffic Office/RWSCU area.

Roadwork: Any activity which places personnel or equipment on the highways.

RWSCU: Road Work Scheduling and Coordination Unit. The unit is responsible for the administration of the Protocol and the Notifications.

Special event: An occurrence, such as the World Youth Day, that takes place on or affects the highway but is not related to construction, investigation or maintenance.

Unscheduled work: An uncondoned event occurring on the highway without a Notification submission.

Urgent work: Work that has safety concerns but is able to provide a sufficient time frame to allow for planning the road or lane closure.

One Time Occurrence: Indicates continuous roadwork.

Recurring Occurrence: Indicates a repeating daily or nightly roadwork activity.