
Subject: Municipal Law Enforcement Levels of Service

Staff Report No. CPS-012-25

**Department/
Commission:** Corporate Services Commission

Date: June 18, 2025

Recommendation:

- 1) That Council endorse the various levels of service as outlined in this report.

Report Highlights

- Outlines on a high level the role and functions that the Municipal Law Enforcement Division (MLED) of Corporate Services Commission provides to the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and its residents.
- Identifies the many different day-to-day activities and job functions that impact an Officer's ability to respond to calls for action.
- Identifies timelines of MLED to initially respond to any calls for action.
- Identifies timelines of the MLED to either bring the matter into compliance, to initiate legal action and/or begin the process of completing default work and billing the owner's property tax.

1. Purpose:

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville's MLED is committed to providing enforcement activities and practices throughout the entire municipality that are effective, fair, consistent and unbiased. In order to ensure that these high standards of enforcement services the MLED are being met, the division has reviewed its service delivery model to identify achievable and reasonable timelines for both initial response to calls for action and to establish compliance or legal action deadlines that the Council of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville can endorse. By Council endorsing these enforcement service levels, it not only shows support of the difficult job that the MLED provides to the residents of Stouffville but will also help to manage everyone's expectations when requested enforcement action are received.

2. Background:

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Municipal Law Enforcement Division is responsible for enforcing various municipal by-laws related to property standards, noise, animal by-laws, parking regulations, etc. and is dedicated to providing fair and consistent enforcement practices that serve the Town in a timely and effective manner. The division ensures compliance with these regulations to uphold community standards, protect public health and safety, and preserve the quality of life for residents. However, increasing population growth have presented new challenges for the department in terms of workload management, response times, and service quality.

In 2024, MLED received and responded to approximately 2,000 calls for action. In order to be registered as a call for action by the Town, all calls for action must include the complainant's name, address and phone number. MLED accepts complaints in person, by e-mail, through the Town's complaint portal, or directly to the Officers while out on the road. In order to discourage frivolous complaints, By-law Services does not register or respond to anonymous complaints. This being said MLED, will review all calls for action and if determined to be a serious life safety issue such as an open pool enclosure or a dangerous tree, staff will attend and take action.

Once a complaint has been generated, the type of complaint, location reported, and time of day of the concern is used to determine which specific Officer is assigned the complaint. MLED policies, procedures, and practices are designed to deal primarily through a reactive, complaints-based system. This approach places priority on the legitimate complaints that have been registered by the residents of the Town and recognizes that the limited staff resources available for proactive enforcement need to be applied where they are absolutely necessary. Approximately 80% of MLED activities are complaint generated, while only 20% of staff time is available for proactive enforcement which is generally focused on parking and sign enforcement. With almost 2,000 calls for action being registered annually, there is a likelihood that infractions will be identified and addressed.

The MLED is lead by the Manager of Municipal Law Enforcement, Supervisor of Municipal Law Enforcement, Supervisor of Animal Services and a full-time Administrative Assistant.

Municipal Law Enforcement (By-law)

The Municipal Law Enforcement Officers enforce numerous by-law complaints including but not limited to Property Standards, Parking Enforcement, Sign Enforcement, Vacant Buildings, Site Alteration, Noise, Fences, Boulevards & Roads, etc.

Animal Services

The Animal Services Officers enforce all animal related By-laws and Legislation.

3. Analysis:

BY-LAW / ANIMAL SERVICES - LEVELS OF SERVICE

Factors Determining Response and Compliance / Legal Action Timelines

There is a general belief that MLED Officers work a dispatch model similar to police which is not accurate. Most Officers work off a complaint assignment model which is similar to the majority of municipalities. Except for some parking matters, which may be transferred through different staff to ensure compliance, the majority of calls for action that are assigned to an Officer remain in that Officer's control and on their complaint lists from the time of the initial investigation phase to marking the file for compliance or the beginning of legal action.

Several factors are taken into account when determining appropriate timelines for both the initial response to the call for action or in establishing the compliance/ legal action timelines up to and including either voluntary or court-authorized compliance. An Officer's ability to process any complaint efficiently and effectively is greatly impacted by many issues and factors beyond their individual control. Examples of such impediments include but are not limited to:

- Threats to public safety; (which always take priority over other complaints)
- Court Preparation and Appearance;
- Assisting with administration and updating of current By-laws research and drafting of new By-laws;
- Town events – Santa Claus Parade, Victoria Day Fireworks, Main St. 5k, Summer Markets, etc.;
- Training; (both internal and external)
- Staff shortages resulting from employment vacancies, holidays, vacation and illness;
- Review and administration of license and permit applications; (temporary signs, inspections for short term rentals, rooming/boarding, etc.)
- Responding to calls for actions from other departments and agencies;
- Coordinating with contractors for private property clean up or repairs including processing of payments in accordance with Town policy;
- All other assigned duties; and
- Etc.

Another factor that has arisen in the Municipal Law Enforcement field in the last few years is the sheer complexity of the types of files that Officers are receiving in the course of their normal duties. At times, the amount education and preparation required for investigations is increasing year over year. Issues like past history, previous convictions, minor variances, site plan amendments, superior court activities, etc. all play a factor.

Outside of timelines, it is also important to recognize that when all staff are out on the roads during their duties, there is an expectation that exceptional customer service will be provided. If an Officer comes across any of the below, they will identify the matter pro-actively and enforce. These matters include but are not limited to:

- Accessible parking;
- Fire routes;
- School Zone Enforcement;
- Prohibited parking;
- Road Occupancy Hazards;
- Dogs off leash;
- Dogs running at large; and
- Illegal Dumping.

For a matter of clarification, the following terms are being defined within this report:

Initial Response – means the amount of time in hours or days that the investigating Officer has to conduct an in-person inspection for the first time at the location identified in the call for action.

(NOTE: This Initial Response process is different and above the Town's Customer Service Standards of ensuring that municipal staff contact individuals that have sent in emails and left voicemail messages promptly.)

Compliance / Legal Action - means that the person in contravention of a By-law or piece of Legislation is in voluntary compliance or charges/AMP Notices have been issued and/or contractors have been directed to complete any default work and the costs of that work will be added to the individuals tax roll.

All timelines below have been established in consultation with the Commissioner of Corporate Services, the MLED Supervisors and the MLED Officers.

Below is the Initial Response in which a complaint is investigated within;

- **By-law Calls for Action**
 - Within 24 Hrs
 - Ice and snow on private property
 - No Heat in Apartment
 - Move Outs (excessive curb side garbage)
 - Roadway Occupancy
 - Unsafe pools
 - **Within 5 Days**

- All other types of By-law Requests for Action, unless identified separately.
- **Within 7 Days**
 - Zoning & Site Plan matters
- **Animal Calls for Action**
 - **Within 24 hours**
 - Sick, Injured, Orphaned, Trapped (SIOT)
 - At large animal
 - Deceased Domestic animal
 - Bite / Attack person or domestic animal
 - Police requests
 - **Within 3 Days**
 - All other types of Animal Complaints, unless identified separately.
- **Parking Calls for Action¹**
 - **Within 2 Days**
 - All general parking calls for action
 - **Within 3 Days**
 - For overnight complaints between Dec 1st & Mar 31st
 - **Within 5 Days**
 - Weekend specific complaints
- Once a matter listed above has been opened, it will either be resolved through compliance or require further follow-up action, which may include contracting out work. If follow-up action is needed, the timeline below will guide the completion of next steps and action:
 - **By-law Complaints**
 - **Within 3 Days**
 - No heat
 - Sidewalk Clearing

¹ Parking Calls for Action include complaints submitted to the municipality and do not reflect the proactive enforcement work carried out daily. Officers will make every effort to respond sooner; however, various factors may impact response times. The timelines outlined in this section represent the maximum expected response time.

- Garbage Move-outs (excessive curbside garbage)
- Unsafe pool enclosures
- **Within 30 Days²**
 - All other types of By-law Complaints, unless identified separately
- **Within 60 Days**
 - Noise
- **Within 75 Days**
 - Property Standards
 - Zoning
 - Site Alterations
- **Animal Complaints³**
 - **Within 24 hours**
 - Deceased domestic animal
 - **Within 30 Days**
 - All other types of Animal calls for action, unless identified separately including minor SIOT.
 - **Within 60 days**
 - Dog Owner Liability Act (DOLA) matters
 - Dog attacks
 - Complex SIOT matters
- **Parking Complaints**
 - **Within 30 Days**
 - All Parking related complaints

NOTE: Parking complaints in open violation are considered to be compliant when an Officer has attended the specific location as identified in the call for action on at least 5 separate occasions within a 30-day period. While

² Some matters may require 30 to 75 days for follow-up action due to their complexity.

³ As noted above, unresolved matters may require extended timelines, particularly in complex cases such as detailed investigations into animal concerns—especially those involving the Dog Owners' Liability Act (DOLA) or Serious Injury or Threat (SIOT) matters. These cases often involve extensive investigation and documentation, especially when preparing a file for potential court proceedings.

attending the Officer shall comply with all departmental enforcement policies and practices.

4. Options:

4.1 Option A (Recommended)

That Council endorse the various levels of service as outlined in this report.

5. Financial Implications:

None.

6. Broader Intergovernmental Impacts and/or Considerations:

None.

7. Communication:

None.

8. Alignment with Strategic Plan:

1. A Town that Grows
A Town that grows in support of complete communities
2. An Engaging Town
Increase Community Engagement & Outreach
3. A Safe Town
Make our community safer
4. Organizational Effectiveness
To Elevate our Organizational Effectiveness

9. Attachments:

None.

10. Related Reports:

None.

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For further information on this report, please contact the Department Head: Becky Jamieson, Commissioner of Corporate Services & Town Clerk at 905-640-1900 or 1-855-642-8697 ext. 2224 or via email at becky.jamieson@townofws.ca