

Power outages snarled traffic in York's south end, cops say

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"As long as you have extreme high temperatures and limited electricity supply, you're going to have more of these days," Mr. Fagen said. "Wherever people can do their little bit to reduce their strain on the system every little bit of effort will help."

But there has to be a better way of dealing with electricity shortages, York Regional Police traffic unit Staff Sgt. Chris Bullen said.

"This is unacceptable," he said. "This put peoples' lives at risk. There must be a better solution."

There were no serious accidents stemming from the traffic light problems Wednesday, but traffic was snarled in the south end, Sgt. Bullen said.

The rolling nature of the

WHAT TO DO

The Highway Traffic Act of Ontario says:

- If a signal is flashing green you may proceed forward;
- If a signal is flashing amber you may proceed with caution;
- If a signal is flashing red you should stop, yield the right of way to any coming traffic and proceed when it's safe and;
- When a signal is not functioning at all, treat it as you would a four-way stop.

power cuts made it impossible for police to predict which lights were going down and there aren't enough officers to control traffic at each one.

The region is in the midst of testing a battery-backup system

that would give a traffic signal four hours of power if the electricity goes out, Mr. Cosgrove said.

But rolling out the system for all 700 traffic signals across the region would cost \$7 million.

The backup system is in preliminary tests.

Sgt. Bullen met with York Region transportation and works staff and Powerstream officials Thursday. He hopes they can create a system to warn police and residents if there is a threat of lights malfunctioning.

But it's also important to conserve energy, he stressed.

"I don't know how we can appeal to consumers to cut back on electricity, but something must be done," he said.

Powerstream has committed to working co-operatively with the region and the police on these initiatives, Mr. Fagen said.

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