

Fewer tickets issued amid work-to-rule campaign

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A work-to-rule campaign by York Regional Police has coincided with a huge drop in the number of traffic tickets being handed out to York Region drivers.

Between June 27 and July 17, 2,630 tickets were handed out. During the same time last year, 7,791 tickets were issued. That's a 66-per-cent drop.

This compares to an uptick in the tickets handed out in the three weeks leading up to the action, between June 6 to June 26, 2016 – a rise of almost 1,000 when compared to

last year.

In response to the action, which also includes officers wearing pins and speaking to drivers about the reasons behind the labour strife, the deputy chief has called for officers to “fulfill their legislated and moral obligation” to keep York Region roads safe.

“It has been made clear to all members that our expectation is they will continue to act in a responsible, professional and respectful manner in their day-to-day duties,” Deputy Chief Tom Carrique said. “We care about the safety of road users in our community... we will not allow community safety to be

compromised in any way.”

But it's not just fewer tickets being doled out, there's also been a significant rise in the number of warnings issued by officers, rising by more than 1,000 – 2,195 to 3,218 – between June 27 and July 17.

The issue of tickets has been a flashpoint among frontline police officers and the service's executive command team for years.

In 2015, yorkregion.com published a leaked memo to officers detailing how many tickets officers are obliged to hand out – 260 tickets each month for each 30-man platoon.

The union complained that “ticket quotas” hinder an officer's ability to do the job, limiting their discretion on whether to give a ticket or a warning.

However, Carrique defended the “perfor-

mance indicators” and said traffic safety and speeding is almost always the top concern for residents around the region.

This is not the only area of strife. Officers overwhelmingly voted to begin job action in June after growing frustrated with the service's repeated reprimands against the rank-and-file, docking them pay for running red lights and stop signs while chasing suspects.

York Regional Police Association president Todd Sepkowski said the union can't participate in job shortages or stoppages and he can't comment on what exactly members are doing as part of the work-to-rule campaign.

“We are asking members to wear pins and asking the community for support,” he said. “We want to reiterate with citizens that their safety is always paramount.”



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SUN-TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

York Regional Police Const. Todd Stewart hands out a fine to a driver in this file photo. A work-to-rule campaign by police has coincided with a significant drop in the number of traffic tickets being issued to drivers.

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