

**From:** "Johnston, Sadhu" <Sadhu.Johnston@vancouver.ca>

**To:** "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL" <CCDTMACDL@vancouver.ca>

**Date:** 4/16/2016 11:14:00 AM

**Subject:** Memo to Council on Newspaper Boxes

**Attachments:** [20160416090534768.pdf](#)

Greetings Mayor and Council

Please see attached a memo from our city engineer regarding our approach to news box removals for special events.

I understand a number of you are hearing from the media on this issue. We will convene a meeting with the key stake holders to address their concerns and find ways to address the safety issues in a way that is acceptable to the industry.

In the meantime, I hope this memo answers your questions. Please reach out to Jerry directly if you have further questions.

Best

Sadhu

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ENGINEERING SERVICES  
Jerry Dobrovolny, P.Eng.  
City Engineer / General Manager

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## MEMORANDUM

April 16, 2016

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager  
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager  
Janice MacKenzie, City Clerk  
Lynda Graves, Manager, Administration Services, City Manager's Office  
Rena Kendall-Craden, Director, Communications  
Mike Magee, Special Advisor, Mayor's Office  
Kevin Quinlan, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Katie Robb, Director, Communications, Mayor's Office  
Emma Lee, Director, Community Relations, Mayor's Office  
Cheryl Nelms, Deputy City Engineer

FROM: Jerry Dobrovolny, General Manager of Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Newspaper Box Removal for Special Events

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As the result of a risk assessment<sup>1</sup> conducted by the Vancouver Police Department and reviewed by Engineering<sup>2</sup>, it was recommended that newspaper publishers be requested to remove newspaper boxes for the following events: Vaisakhi Parade (April 16), the Vancouver Sun Run (April 17), and the 4/20 protest at Sunset Beach (April 20). It was noted in the recommendations that the long-term intention was to make such removals regular practice for these and other large, high-profile events.

In the past 2 years, newspaper boxes have been removed from Celebration of Light and New Year's Eve event sites as well as May Day and 4/20 protest peripheries; there have not been complaints registered relating to those removals.

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<sup>1</sup> The risk assessment was based on a review of post-Stanley Cup riot recommendations, best practices in other North American cities, and post-attack analyses of the Boston Marathon, Paris and Brussels incidents.

<sup>2</sup> Film and Special Events Branch and Street Activities Branch.

Pursuant to the Street Distribution of Publications By-law, the City Engineer (General Manager of Engineering Services) and the Deputy City Engineer make up the "Engineering Services Committee". Section 9.5 of that By-law authorizes the Engineering Services Committee to remove newspaper boxes or to request that the permit holder do so (See Appendix A).

The Engineering Services Committee reviewed the recommendations presented by the VPD and consulted with Senior VPD management. The Engineering Services Committee determined that, while more work and consultation is needed regarding changes to special event public safety procedures, the removals for the April events should take place.

City Staff were therefore directed by the Engineering Services Committee to do the following:

- To request that publishers remove their newspaper boxes along the specified areas of the Vaisakhi Parade and Vancouver Sun Run routes as well and in the environs of the 4/20 protest. The request was sent on Tuesday April 12, 2016 and outlined the date and time of removal and reinstatement of the boxes for each event.
- To assign a staff person to assess the impacts on staff, publishers, event organizers and other considerations related to making such actions standard practice. This is to include in-depth consultation with internal and external stakeholders. The report is to be completed in 3-5 weeks and presented to the City Engineer, who will review with Senior Management.

In response to the inquiries made by publishers and media, all attempts have been made to explain the above. The publishers have been offered assistance, free of cost, with the removal of the newspaper boxes. Thirty three boxes were collected by city staff to assist publishers (Georgia Straight 10, Epoch Times 10, Asian Star 4, 24 Hour 3, Metro 3). Inquiries have been responded to as quickly and completely as the information available allowed. Staff acknowledge that more notice to publishers would have been ideal and are committed to engaging with all stakeholders affected by the possible long-term regularization of this practise.

The removal of newspaper boxes, as well as the removal, modification and/or the sealing of affixed or heavy street furniture, is done with public safety uppermost in mind. It is hoped that, in regards to newspaper boxes, the inconvenience this decision has created will be remedied through continued conversation with and assistance to the affected publishers.



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Appendix A

The Street Distribution of Publications By-law, Section 9.5 reads

*If the engineering services committee determines that, as a result of construction, a special event or other temporary street use, the placement, use, repair, maintenance, or operation of a news box, drop box, or multiple publications news box may interfere with any such activity or compromise public safety, security, or accessibility, the engineering services committee may:*

*(a) remove the news box, drop box, or multiple publications news box from the street during such period as the engineering services committee considers appropriate; or*

*(b) order the permit holder to remove the news box or drop box from the street by the date specified by the engineering services committee, and not to return it to the street until the engineering services committee notifies the permit holder that it may do so."*

The By-law includes this definition:

““engineering services committee” means a committee comprised of the city engineer, being the General Manager of Engineering Services, and deputy city engineer;“.