



Halton Regional Police recently introduced a new traffic unit which will be based in Milton. The four-man unit plus one sergeant will investigate fatal vehicle accidents as well as conduct regular spot checks in effort to reduce accidents. From left to right: Constable Frank Phillips, Sergeant Jim Drennan, Police Chief James Harding, Constable Brad Bigrigg, Constable Al McWhirter and Constable Bill Phipps.

New traffic unit starts its patrols

By LINDA KIRBY

Police spot checks, commonly associated with the Christmas season will now become an everyday reality with the start of Halton's own police traffic unit.

The five-man Halton Regional Police unit will be based in Milton but will work throughout the region with the prime goal of reducing fatal motor accidents.

The unit will look after fatal accidents, because too often officers must spend lengthy amounts of time investigating the accident, thus preventing them from looking after general patrol duties, explained Sgt. Jim Drennan.

"We will also be setting up spot checks 52 weeks of the year in targeted areas."

"We will be picking areas where there is a high traffic flow where the frequency of incidents of motor vehicle accidents is high."

The birth of this new traffic squad will not, however, eliminate present radar checks.

Instead the unit will work in co-operation with the different districts, assisting in specific areas.

Their mandate also includes investigating serious, fail to remain accidents, which often requires the co-operation of two separate districts or police departments.

Motorists may also expect to see the officers working at various intersections which have been identified as high risk areas.

"We will be very visible at those points and will be enforcing the law," he said, with special attention to traffic-light violations, improper turns, seatbelt violations, speeding, etc.

"We want to reduce motor vehicle accidents... that is what we are after... one fatal accident is one too many," he said.

From January 1 to June 30 this year, Halton recorded 11 fatal accidents resulting in the deaths of 17 people.

Of those 11 accidents, five involved alcohol. Three of those killed were wearing seatbelts, while nine other not wearing seatbelts were killed.

Sergeant Drennan has definite beliefs on the topic of seatbelts, having undergone extensive training and investigating a number of accidents relative to the topic.

"People tend to think about situations where they might be hit by another car, but they forget what happens in a situation where you lose control of your vehicle in for example, a winter skid.

"How do you intend to stay behind the wheel? And if you are hit and thrown around, you can't steer and control your car from the passenger side," he explained.

"We will certainly be enforcing seatbelt legislation," he said.

"We are looking to achieve quality enforcement through selective enforcement," he explained adding he expects the traffic unit's high visibility to act as a deterrent to those who feel they can break the law and not get caught.

He noted he recently received a letter from the Halton District Health Council indicating survey results show 55 per cent of the respondents want a higher level of traffic enforcement.

One of the more visible aspects of the traffic unit will be the introduction of a new Harley-Davidson 1,350 cc motorcycle.

The bike will be used to conduct radar checks and handle traffic complaints, as well as providing the department with some good public relations.

The motorcycle will also be a valuable asset in traffic duty in heavy traffic-flow areas such as the city streets of Burlington.

"We will also be involved in a great deal of education in the schools," said Sgt. Drennan, adding that officers will participate in school visitations for classroom and auditorium lectures at all high school grades.

ELECTION NIGHT SCENES



With area VIPs like Milton Mayor Gord Krantz (right) in tow, a jubilant Otto Jelinek makes his way through the crush of well-wishers at his victory celebration last night at Oakville's Howard Johnson Motel.

For a third time, Halton chose Jelinek to represent it in Ottawa, this time with the solid support of a majority Conservative government.



New Democratic Party candidate Kevin Flynn watched computer print-outs of election results at the Energy and Chemical Workers Union Hall in Oakville. He'll be back again, he told supporters.

Box score

Jelinek (PC)	26,483
Currie (Lib.)	9,864
Flynn (NDP)	6,793
Kowalchuk (Green)	1,075



Beatty sweeps to seat easily

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