

# Halton's police hit streets today with annual RIDE program

By BEN DUMMETT  
the Herald

Be prepared to encounter a wave of blue and white starting today if you choose to drink and drive.

The Halton Regional Police force is part of a joint Reduce Impaired Driving Everywhere (R.I.D.E.) program involving the Ontario Provincial Police and the four other Toronto area police forces that comes into effect today (Wednesday) and runs through December and into early January.

The other participating forces are Durham Regional Police, The Toronto Metropolitan Police, Peel Regional Police and York Regional Police. The Insurance Bureau of Canada and the Ministry of Transportation will also be taking part in the program.

Constable Gavin Hayes of the Halton Regional Traffic Bureau - the unit that is co-ordinating R.I.D.E. in Halton - said police are on the lookout for drinking and driving throughout the year but the program is intensified during this time of the year because, "the festive time brings out more drinking."

He said police pulled over 27,291 vehicles during the month of December last year. Police suspended 45 licenses for 12 hours each for those drivers who registered a warning signal on the Alcohol Level Evaluation Road Tester Alert. A driver can either register a pass, warning, or fail signal, Const. Hayes said.

Police also charged 12 drivers with various traffic or criminal code violations during December 1988, he added.

The statistics don't stop there. Const. Hayes said 48,662 vehicles were pulled over during 1988, and 3,256 licenses were suspended because these drivers "blew a warning." Another 1,224 drivers were charged with assorted traffic violations, he said.

Const. Hayes did not have statistics for Halton Hills.

He is accompanying Halton Chief of Police James Harding to today's official kick-off at the OPP headquarters in Toronto. Each chief of police will deliver a R.I.D.E.-related message. Chief Harding said he will tell the press

conference that "the forces) working in concert for a common good means it (R.I.D.E.) is a very beneficial program."

Const. Hayes said the force's R.I.D.E. van will be in Halton Hills eight evenings this month. But not surprisingly he wouldn't specify the dates.

He did say the police aren't out to surprise anyone. "We'll be highly visible." The Norval Hill area and the intersection at Mountainview Road and Guelph Street area are two possible locations where people could be stopped, he said.

A first driving impaired offence carries a minimum fine of \$300 and a one-year driver's license suspension, Const. Hayes said. The maximum fine for the first time offender is \$2,000 and or a six-month jail term.

A second-time offender will receive a minimum three-year driver's license suspension and a minimum 14-day jail term. For each subsequent offence punishment is a three-year driver's

license suspension and a minimum of three months in jail, said Const. Hayes.

A charge of impaired driving causing bodily harm carried with it a possible prison term and a driver's license suspension of up to 10 years.

A charge of impaired driving causing death could mean a prison term of 14 years and a lifetime driver's license suspension, he said.

But Const. Hayes said R.I.D.E. is more than an enforcement program. Police are also on the lookout for the other driving related offences such as driving with a suspended license or driving a car that is in disrepair, he explained.

Const. Hayes said those who are stopped and haven't been drinking receive a coupon booklet. "It's a way of showing the police's appreciation for people's cooperation." And he added for every coupon used, Shell Canada donates a dollar to charity.



Constable Gavin Hayes of the Halton Regional Police's regional traffic bureau test an alcohol alert machine that will be used as part of the force's intensified R.I.D.E. program starting today (Wednesday).

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During September and October of this year there have been a number of major fires involving homes under construction in the Burlington area. These fires have caused damage in excess of \$1 million.

Besides the dollar loss caused by these deliberately set fires, police and fire officials are concerned with the danger caused to the firefighters involved in battling the blazes as well as to the danger of the fires spreading to occupied homes in the area.

The fires have occurred in the north and southeast sections of the city.

The following suspicious vehicle and youths were reported in the area of one of the fires which took place at 3 a.m. on Sept. 2 in

the southeast area of Burlington.

A dark, possibly brown Mazda RX7 with three male occupants, all in their late teens:

1) Male, white, 5'8", brown hair.

2) Male, white, 6'1", muscular build, 200 lbs., dark hair cut short but long at the front.

3) Male, black, dark curly hair shaven at the sides.

All three youths were wearing baggy t-shirts and knee length shorts.

Crime Stoppers will pay up to \$1,000 for information that leads to an arrest in this case or any other case. Callers are not required to reveal their identities or testify in court. The Crime Stoppers toll free number is 1-800-668-5151.

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