

Fair warnings

Halton Police are focusing their attention on motorists for two very different reasons this month.

First, they report that impaired driving charges are being laid at a rate of close to one a day in the region this year.

Since Jan. 1, 295 drivers on Halton roads have been arrested for impaired driving. Locally, the numbers are nothing to brag about even though Halton Hills had the fewest charges laid with 36 (Burlington leads with a total of 123, Oakville is next with 87, followed by Milton with 49).

Worse yet is that alcohol played a contributing role in four of this year's 13 traffic fatalities in the region.

Before you drink and drive, police want you to consider the penalties if caught.

A first offence sees the driver's licence suspended for a year and a fine of at least \$1,000. Following the suspension, the driver is on the hook for the cost to install a mandatory interlock ignition device on their car.

Second offenders face licence suspensions of three years and a minimum of 30 days in jail. These drivers are also required to attend a Back on Track course for 11 months. When their licence is reinstated, an interlock ignition device must be re-installed at their expense.

Subsequent offences will result in a jail term of not less than 120 days.

Did we mention the annual RIDE campaign kicks off today. You've been warned.

The second reminder from Halton Police is about the dramatic rise in crimes of opportunity as temperatures get cooler and overly-trusting motorists leave their vehicles open and unattended— sometimes running while the keys are still in the ignition.

According to police during a 10-week fall/winter period last year, 25 vehicles were stolen after being left idling and unattended.

There is a Town bylaw that prohibits motorists from letting their vehicle idle unnecessarily for more than three minutes. Anyone caught violating the rule could face a fine of \$50.

Again, you've been warned. Pay heed.

Letters to the editor policy

Letters must include an address and daytime telephone number. Anonymous letters will not be published. Letters should not exceed 150 words and may be edited for content and/or length. Publication is not guaranteed.

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The Independent & Free Press

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WEB POLL RESULTS

Thousands of Ontarians went cross-border shopping during the U.S. Thanksgiving. Which of the following responses best reflects your opinion on shopping in the U.S.

- If I can buy it cheaper in the U.S. I will shop until I drop and Canadian shops should do more to match U.S. prices (57%)
- I won't shop over the border because it hurts Canadian retailers and our economy (43%)

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Letters to the editor

Changes needed on deadly road

Dear editor,

The occurrence of yet another serious vehicular accident on Hwy. 7 between Fourth Line and Tanner's Drive on the east side of Acton prompts the question, 'should speed limits and/or passing lanes be reviewed?'

Having lived at this end of town for 24 years I have seen too many accidents, most of which involve speed and/or passing.

The speed limit passing the Sobeys plaza has been 60 km-h, prior to the retail area being developed east of Churchill Road.

The speed limit immediately east of Tanner's Dr. jumps to 80 km-h with passing lanes approaching Fourth Line.

Again, this speed limit pre-dates the hundreds of homes built in this area recently.

Coles Crt., a small crescent, falls in between on the north side. Residing on Coles for seven years has given me first-hand experience navigating this treacherous stretch of highway.

Motorists use this stretch to pass

one another (faster than 80 km-h) on their way out of town quite regularly, making the westbound turn attempt from Coles or Fourth Line dangerous.

Several times I have seen traffic counters (mechanical and manned) in this area yet nothing has changed.

We have the ability to prevent accidents based on driving patterns and volume yet nothing happens until 'enough' people are injured or 'enough' fatalities occur.

With development comes changes on how we use our infrastructure safely. Several, yes several, collisions have taken place here this year with alarming frequency.

Remind your friends and family about this seemingly innocent stretch of highway. Remind Halton Hills government. Remind yourself.

R. Cardoso, Acton

Fire crews lauded

Dear editor,

We are forever indebted to the amazing firefighters from both Milton and Halton Hills.

On October 3 we suffered a house fire. Thanks to the quick initial response of the Milton fire department, our home was saved and suffered

minimal structural damage. Seeing the incredible amount of smoke and water damage to the home has shown us the intense amount of work carried out by the fire crews from both services. We are grateful.

The professionalism, capability and compassion shown by our fire services during both the fire and the subsequent investigation and reporting period are greatly appreciated. It made a difficult situation that much easier.

We are incredibly thankful for the school programs and training provided to our children by the fire departments— due to the safety and education programming provided in the schools over the years, our children knew exactly what to do to get out safely and calmly.

Many thanks to all who supported the efforts of the fire departments—the EMS staff who attended on site to make sure both we, and the fire crews, were well, Halton Regional Police which directed traffic and ensured that the fire crews and tanker trucks could get to us quickly, and lastly, our wonderful neighbours the Pandas and Chudleighs who opened their homes to us on the day of the fire. We are fortunate to live in such an amazing and caring community.

Jody Johnson, Halton Hills