

## Drive SAFE this winter



by Regional Chair Gary Carr

With the winter weather here, it's important that we work together to ensure safe driving this winter season.

Safe driving starts before we get behind the wheel, through proper vehicle maintenance and planning for an alternate ride home if you may have had a few drinks. Working together, we can all ensure we have a safe winter on Halton's roads.

### Working together to stop impaired driving

Halton has a reputation as Canada's safest region and this is due in large part to the vested interest residents have in ensuring one another's well-being.

As part of Halton Region's ongoing partnership with the Halton Regional Police Service and Mothers Against Drunk Driving (M.A.D.D.), Halton has the *Safe Roads...Your Call* program to educate motorists about the dangers of drinking and driving.

This program encourages motorists to help police by calling 9-1-1 immediately when they witness a suspected impaired driver on Halton roads.

Once 9-1-1 operators receive a call from the public through the *Safe Roads...Your Call* program, it is assigned high priority and all available police resources are used to locate the suspected vehicle. Motorists reporting a suspected impaired driver in progress should have a description of the vehicle, the nearest intersection where the suspect was witnessed and direction the vehicle was headed, and if possible, a license plate number.

We want everyone to stay safe on our roads, so motorists should not jeopardize their own safety, or that of other motorists in order to provide police with any of these details – only report what you can safely observe.

Impaired driving is a crime in progress and as the extra eyes of police on Halton roadways, residents play an instrumental role in enhancing road safety and assisting police in their efforts to stop impaired driving on our roads.

### Preparing for winter driving

The three key elements of safe winter driving are to stay alert, slow down, and stay in control. Always drive according to weather conditions, and be sure to keep a safe distance between you and the vehicle in front of you to avoid situations where you may have to brake suddenly on a slippery surface.

Halton's Drive SAFE website has winter driving tips at [www.halton.ca/winterdriving](http://www.halton.ca/winterdriving) to remind you of how to stay safe on our roads this winter.

Since winter driving can be especially challenging, it's imperative that your full attention is on the road and both hands are on the wheel. As challenging as it can be, we need to make sure that our Blackberries, iPhones, cell phones and all our other gadgets are put away during the drive so we can focus on the road ahead.

### Road Safety Action Plan

Halton Region isn't just thinking about road safety during the winter – we have also created the **Road Safety Action Plan** to improve safety on Regional Roads. The Road Safety Action Plan uses three equal approaches - engineering, education and enforcement.

#### Engineering:

- Every year, Halton's Transportation Services department reviews Regional intersections and road segments to identify areas where potential safety improvements could be made.
- Based on safety assessments, areas for improvement are identified and recommended changes are made to Regional Council.
- To ensure the highest level of safety on Regional roads, Halton carries out road safety audits for new roadway designs, as well as for major road improvement projects.

#### Education:

- To educate the public about road safety, the Drive SAFE campaign was created.

#### Enforcement:

- The Halton Regional Police Service is out in the community enforcing the speed limits in high-speed locations and Community Safety Zones, as well as monitoring drivers on all roads, to help ensure Halton's roads stay safe.

To find out more about road safety within Halton, dial 311 or visit [www.halton.ca/transportation](http://www.halton.ca/transportation).

## Winter Safety Checklist

1. **Clear snow and ice** from all windows, lights, mirrors and roof.
2. Make sure you have **plenty of windshield washer fluid** and that it is rated to -40°C or lower.
3. **Plan your route** ahead of time. Let someone know of your destination and expected time of arrival.
4. **Wear comfortable clothing** that doesn't restrict your movement while at the wheel. Have warm clothing in case you need to get out of your vehicle.
5. **Always keep the gas tank at least half full.**
6. Bring a **map** and be prepared to take an alternative route.
7. **Bring a cell phone in case of emergencies and only use it when safely pulled over and parked at the side of the road.**
8. Use a matching set of **all-season or snow tires.**
9. **Leave enough space between cars** – a guide to safe spacing under normal driving conditions is the two-second rule (leaving two seconds of driving space between your vehicle and the car in front of you). In winter, and especially during poor weather conditions, double the two-second rule.



### Halton Region Meeting Schedule

- Jan. 11, 9:30 a.m.** Health & Social Services Cte
  - Jan. 12, 9:30 a.m.** Planning & Public Works Cte
  - Jan. 13, 9:30 a.m.** Administration & Finance Cte
  - Jan. 24, 9:30 a.m.** Budget Review
  - Jan. 26, 9:30 a.m.** Regional Council
- Meetings can be viewed at [www.halton.ca](http://www.halton.ca).

Please let us know as soon as possible if you will have an accessibility or accommodation need at a Halton Region hosted event or meeting.

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