

The 411 on 911

Imagine police, fire or ambulance services personnel being delayed from responding to an emergency due to an accidental or non-urgent call.

What if it was you or one of your loved ones who was in jeopardy?

As reported last week in this newspaper, Halton Police have been inundated by nearly 11,000 false 911 calls over the past four months.

These calls endanger public safety by straining police resources.

Most false calls are accidental, but many are from people misusing 911 in non-urgent situations due to a misunderstanding of the emergency phone system.

So let's clear it all up with some simple rules.

Don't use 911 for directory assistance, information about road conditions, school closings or to get directions.

911 isn't to be used for general inquiries or administrative calls. If you need police, fire or ambulance services in a non-emergency, non-life threatening situation, consult your local phone directory.

Don't use 911 in the case of non-life threatening power outages or to report fallen trees. If you notice a downed power line (and no individual or people are in jeopardy) contact your local hydro provider. For fallen trees, contact a local tree removal service listed in your telephone directory under 'tree services.'

Don't program 911 into any phone. It causes accidental dialing of 911. Ensure your cell phone is resting in a safe place with the key pad locked.

Following these rules could save a life.

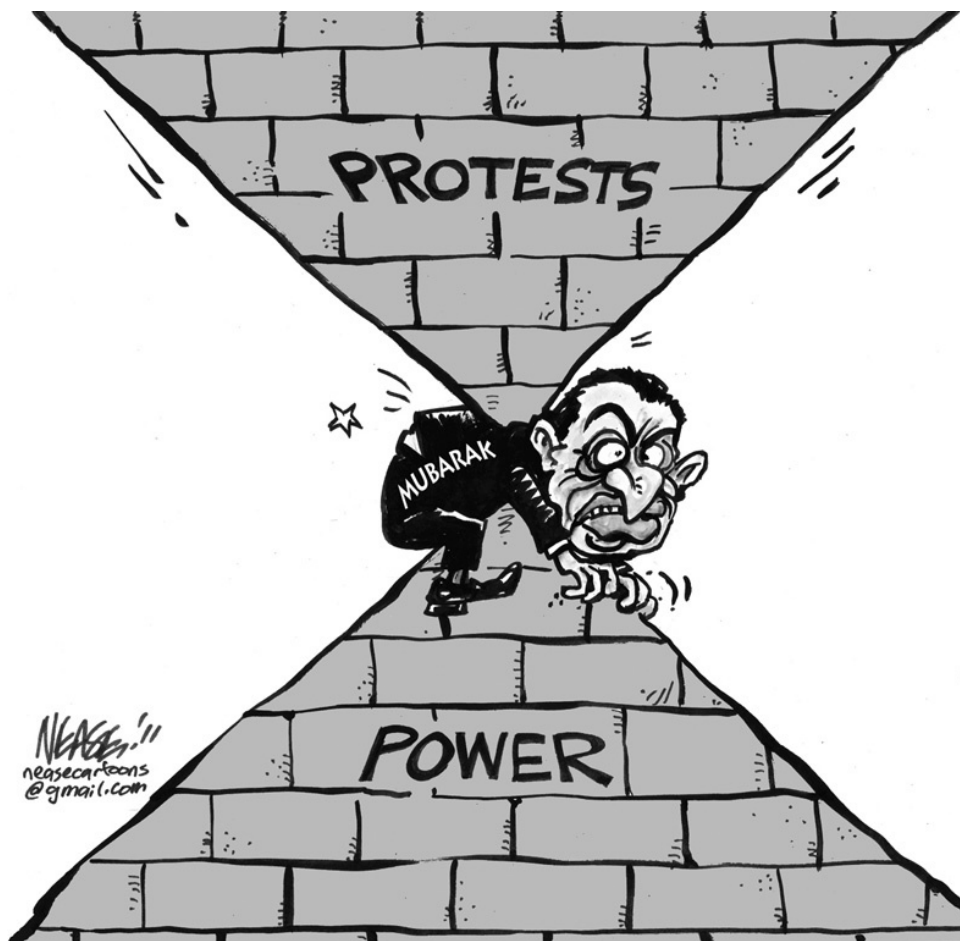
Letters to the editor policy

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 Anonymous letters will not be published.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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WEB POLL RESULTS

In the wake of the recent snowstorm how do you feel local works crews performed?

- The crews did a top-notch job (65%)
- The crews did a lousy job (9%)
- The crews did an okay job, but it could have been better (26%)

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Letters to the editor

Carr defends 'open' budget process

Dear editor,

As Halton Regional Chair, I take exception to the February 8 editorial that suggests the Region did not appropriately disclose the full impact of its 2011 budget.

It is precisely for transparency reasons that the Region separates the police budget. The Police Services Act does not permit Regional council to alter the Police Services budget—it is set by the Halton Region Police Services Board.

In addition, water and wastewater services are not paid for by property taxes, they are paid for by users who are billed through hydro companies based on the volume of water they consume.

Regional Council is very conscious of the tax impact on Halton households. For the past two years, council has been successful in not raising taxes for Regional programs and services.

This is one of the best records in all of Canada.

The Region's budget process is open and transparent. If residents have any Regional concerns or

comments, I encourage them to email me at gary.carr@halton.ca.

*Gary Carr,
Halton Regional Chair*

Students thanked

Dear editor,

On Jan. 7 I was driving past Georgetown District High School when my car died.

Thanks to all the students who came to my aid, as well as the help and information I received from the automotive shop teachers.

With all the negative comments we read and hear regarding a small minority of students, what a positive experience this was for me. Thank you all.

Ann Anderson-Wilcox, Georgetown

No licence needed for tattoo artists

Dear editor,

Re: Jan. 25 Region issues tattoo warning.

I am a local tattoo artist. I've been tattooing for 17 years in and around Halton Hills. I've tattooed in both commercially rented studios, as well as home-based studios. I have never had any issue with the health department.

Perhaps in the future if people are going to warn the public about potential health risks involved with tattooing, or piercing, they should do it in a way that is not detrimental to those of us in the tattoo community who do things right.

Get your facts straight. There is no "licence" for tattoo artists. This article implies that you should not get a tattoo at an "unlicensed establishment", leading people to believe a licence is required to be a tattoo artist. Absolutely false.

Secondly, the picture you've posted with this article shows a person tattooing someone without a protective machine bag barrier on their tattoo machine, which goes against health department protocol. Please people, do your homework. Ultimately, it's your health.

Larry Kovacevic, Georgetown
 (Editor's note: The Region press release and our news story referred to "uninspected" facilities. The word "unlicensed" incorrectly appeared in the final paragraph. The Independent and Free Press regrets the error. The photo was a file photo used to illustrate tattooing. No actual tattooing was being performed.)

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