

Going draconian may be only option

What are we doing wrong? In spite of extensive public education campaigns, in spite of extraordinary efforts by police and anti-drunk driving advocates, in spite of a raft of provincially-mandated penalties over and above the Criminal Code of Canada, Canada is not doing well on reducing alcohol-related driving deaths.

A recent study from the U.S. Centres for Disease Control reports that our country ranks No. 1 among 19 relatively wealthy countries.

The study, recognized as one of the most reliable of its kind, found that while fewer people are dying from motor vehicle crashes, the percentage of road deaths linked to alcohol impairment was 34 per cent higher than any other surveyed nation.

The study has experts warning that Canada needs new strategies and laws to move the needle to become competitive with wealthy countries that do much better. But what new strategies are appropriate? Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada (MADD) argues, as it has for some time now, that part of the answer is random roadside breath tests.

The problem with that, and the reason the federal government doesn't support that specific measure, is that it butts up against our Constitutional right of protection from unreasonable search and seizure.

What measures might work? A private member's bill from Conservative MP Steven Blaney calls for a mandatory minimum sentence of five years for impaired driving causing death. So far the Trudeau government has said it is not interested in mandatory minimums, but unless it has clearly better ideas it ought to be open in this case.

MADD and others also advocate stronger administrative penalties. These could include measures like vehicle impoundment and licence suspension for drivers who are caught with blood alcohol levels below the criminal threshold of 0.08 but in the warning range of 0.05 to 0.08.

Sounds draconian? Maybe. And certainly random roadside checks are. But something needs to change because it is clear the current regime, while well-intentioned and executed, isn't working by itself. Sooner or later draconian measures may be the only option.

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Letters to the editor

Follow the rules of the road

In response to please, park where you are supposed to letter in the July 29 edition:

Well said, Debra. I too have noticed a lot of people being total tools and parking in front of banks at Georgetown Market Place halfway up on the sidewalk, half in road, blocking traffic or making it difficult to get around because they are in a hurry or just popping in to grab something quick.

In front of Metro and the Superstore again, people are being totally oblivious to the fact that there are cars lined up behind them trying to get past but can't due to oncoming traffic.

I asked one of them where I can get this special permit where I could park in middle of the road and in no parking area as well as fire route and block

traffic.

Guess what I got told?

I think we need more parking officers and tow truck. Hand out tickets and tow them. I would bet it would be a good money making venture for the city and perhaps teach some manners.

Also it seems these days that stopping at a red light and stop sign while making a right hand turn is optional. I hate to be on the sidewalk or in bike lane trying to cross the street. You most likely will get hit. They all just look to the left if they can beat that one car and gain a few seconds while not looking if someone is on the sidewalk.

As far as I'm concerned, every traffic light and every stop sign should have a camera. If you do not stop, pay a fine. Someone I know got nabbed three times at a \$325 each time.

This would be a good way for the town to make extra money.

Joe Sebalj,
Georgetown

13th-annual Crossing Guard Appreciation Event

On behalf of Mayor Rick Bonnette and Members of Town Council, thank you to St. Brigid Catholic School for hosting the Town of Halton Hills recent School Crossing Guard appreciation event.

Our crossing guards do an amazing job ensuring the safety of our children and for that we thank them.

A special thank you to the event's sponsors, Halton District Catholic School Board, Halton District School Board, Halton Regional Police Service, McDonald's Restaurant, Dairy Queen, Terra Cotta Cookies and Georgetown Market Place.

Dick Spear,
Superintendent of Public Works