

Police launch locally produced distracted driving video at GDHS

By **LISA TALLYN**
Staff Writer

Georgetown District High School students saw the deadly consequences of texting and driving in a hard-hitting Halton Regional Police video launched at the school last week.

The two-minute distracted driving video made by police in partnership with Cogeco TV, Safe Communities Halton Hills, GDHS, Halton Hills Fire Department, Halton EMS, Z103, Tyler Transport, Fred's Towing and Anthony Acres, depicts a mock crash caused by a texting driver in which two people were killed.

The video is airing as a public service announcement on Cogeco throughout Halton, leading up to Canada Road Safety Week May 13-19.

It can also be viewed at: <http://www.tvcogeco.com/milton/gallery/tvcogeco-shows/555-psas-how-tos> and will be uploaded to YouTube and the Halton Regional Police Service website.

"Since the inception of the Distracted Driving law in 2009, the use of cell phones and telecommunication devices is rampant," said Sgt. Chantal Corner. "It is not so much the people who talk on the phone (although still against the law, but easier to catch...), it is the texting as drivers keep the phone in their lap to keep it hidden which means their eyes are off the road. One look at a text message takes a drivers eyes off the road for 5 seconds — a long time, especially when one is travelling at high speeds."

Last year Halton Police issued 4,905 Provincial Offence Notices for Distracted Driving offences.

Corner said in the first quarter of this year, 2,155 distracted driving charges



**HRPS SUPT.
CHRIS PERKINS**

more enforcement in this area. Two, drivers are still not getting it...it is a habit that people can't or won't break....perhaps until it's too late. A tough lesson to learn...as the video so greatly depicts," said Corner.

Halton Regional Police Superintendent Chris Perkins said at the video launch that during a Distracted Driving campaign in April last year 650 tickets for driving with a handheld device were handed out by police in Milton and Halton Hills alone.

Perkins added in January and February this year collisions in Milton and Halton Hills were up 49 per cent— 25 per cent of those were rear-enders. He said some were due to weather conditions, but he added he thinks texting was also a cause.

The fine for driving while using a handheld device was increased to \$280 last month, from \$155.

Acting in the production, filmed in Halton Hills in November, were Georgetown high school students Emma Holt, Konrad Posberg, Mike Bilodeau and Ben de BoerSap. GDHS cosmetology students Rebecca Henry and Caley Pelkeys did the actors' makeup. Keiran and Aidan Lawson of Guelph also acted in the video.

Also appearing were Halton Police officers, Halton Hills firefighters and Halton EMS personnel.

were laid Halton-wide, compared to 895 during the same period last year— a 140 per cent increase.

"One reason... police are focusing on this offence and in the interest of public safety are conducting

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