

Police's 'enhanced tool kit' delivers results

Enforcement tactics see increase in roadside tests and arrests, writes Duraiappah



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Column

The Halton Regional Police Service is targeting its enforcement initiatives in an effort to address impaired driving - one of the three big road safety issues in the region.

We are leveraging our existing database of impaired-related information and used business intelligence and advanced analytics to refine our deployment model, develop innovative tactics and inform enforcement activities.

The Halton Regional Police Services' (HRPS) analytics and decision support team created 'heat maps' of impaired offences, which clearly highlighted high-risk times of day and days of the week, enabling us to ramp up enforcement at these peak periods.

The service's communication bureau has also rolled out changes, including the consolidation of sub-codes used to differentiate between 911 calls and non-emergency calls.

In October 2017, we began publishing the names of those charged with impaired-related offences. The hope is that this tactic will act as a deterrent to potential offenders, and that it will serve to assist the public in identifying offenders who may violate their driving suspension.

"Impaired driving is a crime under the Criminal Code of Canada," said Sgt. Ryan Snow of the HRPS's traffic services unit. "Citizens need to understand that the choice to drive impaired has serious and long-term consequences."

To date, feedback from members of the public in response to the publication of the names of alleged offend-

ers has been overwhelmingly positive.

Strategic partnerships

Last spring, the service partnered with MADD Canada to launch Campaign 911 across the region.

While first introduced in 2007, last year's highly publicized launch represented an opportunity to replicate the national success of the campaign at a regional level.

The campaign's key message reminds residents that by calling 911 and reporting suspected impaired drivers to police, we can all play a role in reducing impaired driving crashes, deaths and injuries.

HRPS continues to use #Campaign911 and #MakeTheCall911 in its public-facing social media messages to further awareness.

Mobile signs

Although MADD Canada and HRPS have partnered since 2009, a new initiative in 2017 saw the placement of digital mobile signs at the scene of high-profile impaired-related collisions so that residents could recognize that impaired driving isn't just an issue elsewhere, and that efforts to reduce impaired driving are a shared responsibility.

MADD has also placed static "Safe Roads . Your Call" signs on regional roads in an effort to remind motorists to report suspected impaired driving.

Project Drive Thru

As a complement to the broader, overarching service-wide strategy, localized initiatives were developed.

Last year, HRPS partnered with fast food restaurants in Burlington for Project Drive Thru. The goal of this unique pilot initiative

was to get drivers impaired by drugs or alcohol out from behind the wheel. Project Drive Thru provides drive-thru employees with the tools to quickly and easily identify customers believed to be under the influence and the empowerment to do something about it, such as calling 911.

Since the launch of this program in April, there were 12 drive-thru initiated calls in Burlington alone that resulted in impaired charges being laid. This program has received local, national and international attention for its innovation.

Another initiative includes RIDE 101 events put on by the service's high school liaison officers.

The events serve to educate drivers, particularly young and future drivers, of the responsibilities associated with driving a vehicle and the consequences associated with mixing alcohol and/or drugs with the operation of that vehicle.

Over 500 students were provided with an opportunity to wear goggles that simulated the effects of impairment by drugs or alcohol while conducting various physical ability tests.

Outcome

As a result of our enhanced tool kit of enforcement tactics, 2,563 roadside tests were conducted in 2017 - double the number of tests conducted in 2016.

More than 550 motorists were charged with impaired-driving related offences (driving while ability impaired, care and control, driving over 80 mgs and failure or refusal to provide a sample), which represents a 26 per cent increase over the previous year's statistics.

Last year, officers issued 527 roadside suspensions, a 55 per cent increase over 2016.

During the Festive RIDE program that runs throughout December, HRPS officers conducted 514 roadside tests, nearly double the number of tests conducted during the 2016 instalment

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