

# Police go undercover to nab distracted drivers in Halton Hills

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For those people who still aren't getting the message about distracted driving, Halton Regional Police Service are turning the tables with some surreptitious tactics to enforce the laws.

During the month of March, 10 officers in the force's one district response unit (DRU) in Halton Hills and Milton focussed on catching in the act those multi-tasking motorists who just can't wait to send that text or make a phone call while on the road.

As of Sunday, the DRU has laid more than 100 distracted-driving charges in North Halton so far this month.

An Independent & Free Press reporter rode along with Const. Scott Stevenson on a Thursday afternoon for a couple of hours in a sleek, stealthy ride that does not resemble any typical unmarked police vehicle.

During the patrol throughout

Halton Hills, Const. Stevenson issued three tickets for distracted driving, with all three offences taking place while the vehicles were stopped at a red light.

"It's quite a shock to them when they see the police lights come on," he said.

"I like the ones where you have (a driver) sitting there at a light texting, and you've made observations for a good 20 to 30 seconds. When you pull them over, they say, 'I just grabbed it from falling off the dashboard,' or 'I had to text my kids to see if they're OK.' Well, you can pull over and do that at the side of the road. Believe it or not, there are still people who don't know that you can't use your phone while stopped at a red light."

The DRU deploys three non-traditional police vehicles for enforcement and has used some other crafty methods to catch those motorists whose attention is on their phones and not the roadway, such as officers dis-

guised as panhandlers at busy intersections.

DRU Sgt. Paul Rudall asked that descriptions and images of

the unmarked vehicles not be used with this article, while con-

● See POLICE, page 30

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