

# BACK-TO-SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT FOR DRIVERS: FOLLOW RULES OF THE ROAD

By now it should be no surprise for drivers to see a large presence of police officers on local and regional roads on the first day of school, just as Halton drivers experienced on Tuesday.

Police in school zones, conducting radar or watching for other Highway Traffic Act infractions, have been synonymous with a return to school ever since the launch of the All Hands on Deck initiative. The goal is to see uniform officers, from the front line right up to the chief of police and deputies, fan out to every corner of Halton Region to make a statement about driver safety.

While some years police have been able to nab drivers motoring along at excessive speeds, the initiative isn't just about handing out tickets. It's about awareness and education, something that is exhibited by police wearing those fluorescent-coloured safety vests conducting radar at the side of the road rather than tucking themselves into a corner discreetly in their vehicle. That education is critical to ensure there are no tragedies on our roads as thousands of kids head to school.

It's a message to drivers, who may have become accustomed to quieter streets during their daily commutes with school out, that children are more present on the streets, whether on foot or on bikes, particularly before and after school.

The return of school also means that school buses are back on the streets, picking up their passengers. Do you know the rules when a school bus stops with its red lights flashing? Here's some advice from the Ministry of Transportation.

When driving on a road without a median: Drivers travelling in both directions must stop for a stopped school bus with its upper red lights flashing. When you approach the bus from the front, stop at a safe distance to let children get on or off the bus and cross the road. Don't move forward until the red lights have stopped flashing or the bus begins to move.

When driving on a road with a median: Traffic coming from the opposite direction is not required to stop.

Failure to follow these rules could result in a fine up to \$2,000 and six demerit points.

Not only is it not worth the hit to your driving record, but think for a moment about the truly precious cargo we rely on school buses to transport for us five days of the week - our children.

Make sure you're not distracted behind the wheel at any point (put down that phone), including pulling out of your driveway. Always check for children on the sidewalk, driveway and behind your vehicle before backing up.

In general, take your time and be prepared to have a lot more patience than you may have had over the lazy days of summer. Things are a lot more busy out there. Be safe.

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## 1 IN 8 SENIORS LIVE IN POVERTY LOCALLY

RETIREMENT IS NOT THE GOLDEN AGE FOR MANY SENIORS, WRITES SABIHUDDIN



SARAH SABIHUDDIN  
Column

Do you know Mrs. Jackson? She is an 86-year-old widow, living alone in a downtown area rental apartment. She has minimal income derived from Old Age Security (OAS) and Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and relies on a local food bank to supplement her weekly meals.

Mrs. Jackson struggles to pay her monthly utility bills, especially in the summer and winter months. She does not have access to a vehicle and depends on community volunteers to take her to free programming for seniors in her community.

Everyone gets older and unanticipated life changes can happen. Our population continues to age rapidly and many seniors face financial challenges as they age in our community. Seniors in Halton make up 27 per cent of the region's overall population. One in eight of these seniors live in poverty.

There is a long held assumption that all seniors in Halton are financially comfortable, however, seniors living in Halton often struggle with precarious employment, lack of health and pension plans, inflated housing costs and expensive food options. Many seniors over the age of 65 are forced to take on paid work in grocery, hardware and fast food locations. For them, retirement is simply not an option.

It should come as no surprise that many free community meals provided by local faith and community groups are consistently provided to Halton seniors. It is also quite clear that Halton

seniors comprise a growing number of food bank users, representing 17 per cent of all food bank clients.

Locally, the average monthly rent is \$1,405 making living on a fixed income challenging. Since one in five of our senior neighbours live alone, housing can quickly become unaffordable. The combination of being in poverty and living alone sets the stage for social, emotional and psychological isolation which will, overtime, have negative effects on overall well-being and life expectancy.

If we are to have legitimate pride in Halton Region being one of the top places to live in Ontario, it must equally apply to low-income residents, including our seniors, now and in the future. Retirement is not the golden age for many of our seniors.

If you, or someone you know, wants to become involved in achieving our vision of No Neighbour in Need visit [www.haltonpovertyroundtable.com](http://www.haltonpovertyroundtable.com) or follow us on Twitter @HaltonPovertyRT.

*Sarah Sabihuddin is the Halton Poverty Roundtable director of community engagement.*

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