

# 'VERY SCARY SITUATION'

## CARJACKINGS ON THE RISE IN HALTON

DAVID LEA  
dlea@metroland.com

Halton police are warning residents about an increase in carjackings across the GTA — as well as here in Halton.

In a recent media release, police said people involved in carjackings are targeting high-end vehicles and noted that residents — in Halton Hills, and across the region — should be aware of their surroundings while entering and exiting their vehicles and while driving.

Const. Steve Elms noted that in 2021, there were just three carjackings in Halton.

Already this year, there have been 10 carjackings reported, with eight taking place in Oakville and one each in Burlington and Milton.

No incidents have been reported in Halton Hills so far, and police hope to keep it that way.

"The recent rash of carjackings both in Halton and across the GTA is cer-

tainly cause for great concern," said Elms.

"Local police services have combined resources and established a task force to further co-ordinate law enforcement efforts in combating these crimes. Carjackings are often violent and affect the larger community, as well as the victims involved."

Elms went on to say that the collaborative approach being taken by police targets not just the criminals committing the carjackings, but the organized criminal groups behind them.

Those involved in the Halton incidents were often armed and employed different techniques to zero in on the cars they were after. During a Feb. 26 incident, which occurred in Oakville at 11:30 p.m., two men approached the victim after he pulled into his driveway.

Police said one man pointed a gun and demanded keys to the victim's 2021 Audi QS5.

A May 31 incident in Milton, which occurred at 11 p.m., saw carjackers stalk a pizza delivery driver and rob him of his 2004



David Lea/Metroland

North Oakville Ward 7 Residents' Association president Nav Nanda is among those concerned with the rise in carjackings.

Acura TSX at gunpoint when he made a stop.

A May 30 Oakville incident, in which a woman was carjacked by two men, was completely different in that it occurred at 3:45 p.m., in broad daylight, in a busy commercial parking lot.

The men in that incident made off with her 2020 Land Rover.

Shots were actually fired during a March 30 carjacking in Oakville, though no one was hit.

Elms said Halton police are not in a position to speculate on why carjackings are on the rise.

Police have said that other vehicle theft methods, like reprogramming thefts, can see a thief drive away with a vehicle in as little as three minutes without having to deal with the owner.

Officers said the stolen high-end vehicles are often destined to be shipped overseas due to their high resale value there, though sometimes stolen vehicles are used to commit other crimes.

North Oakville Ward 7 Residents' Association president Nav Nanda said the recent carjackings are concerning.

She noted the neighbourhoods in her ward have already been a prime target for car thieves.

"We held a meeting with Halton police on how to prevent car thefts and we got really involved with our stakeholders, trying to educate the public a little bit more on how to prevent car thefts," said Nanda.

"Now the bigger concern is these carjackings because how do you pre-

vent that? That is a very scary situation."

The residents' association leader is calling on those in her community to be vigilant and said she is hopeful police will receive the resources they need to get this problem under control, whether that be through increased patrols in targeted areas or through collaboration with other police forces.

Nanda praised Halton police for their work in combating all forms of auto theft, pointing to a recent operation that saw officers make four arrests and recover 32 stolen vehicles.

Halton police have reported some progress in their efforts to combat local carjackings, with two separate sets of arrests made earlier this month, including one in connection with the incident where shots were fired.

Elms said anyone who finds themselves confronted by a carjacker should not fight back and just give up the vehicle.

*STORY BEHIND THE STORY: With carjackings on the rise both across the GTA and in Halton, we wanted to share how police and residents feel about the matter and what measures are being taken to combat the problem.*



SCAN THESE CODES for details on recent carjacking arrests.

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