

Heat maps help police zero in on impaired driving hot spots

Information enabled service to alter deployment models, writes deputy chief Duraiappah

The Halton Regional Police Service (HRPS) 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 using business intelligence and advanced analytics to refine our deployment model, develop innovative tactics and inform enforcement activities.

Our first goal was to use existing frontline resources more effectively to combat impaired driving. This required thinking outside the box of traditional models of enforcement.

Heat mapping

The HRPS's Analytics and Decision Support team created "heat maps" of impaired offences, which clearly highlighted high-risk times of day and days of the week during which impaired driving offences in Halton were most likely to occur. Analysts took these temporal maps and overlaid them with heat maps of locations where impaired collisions were occurring.

As a result of this collated information, we altered our deployment models to ensure that frontline officers were conducting enforcement activities at different times and locations, where the interception of



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Column

an impaired driver was likely greater. This included RIDE enforcement during daytime hours, with smaller teams and at geographic locations supported by historical collision data.

The result? RIDE enforcement at peak periods resulted in increased impaired arrests.

Communications: Crime in Progress

When a citizen calls police to report a suspected impaired driver, the 911 call is initially captured by the police communications bureau, which then transfers the call to a dispatcher.

The dispatcher prioritizes the call based on all available information, and the call is then dispatched to frontline officers accordingly.

When they examined data associated with impaired-related calls, they said they found a direct correlation between the time it takes for a call taker to receive the call, and the dispatcher to dispatch the

call, to the likelihood of an arrest for an impaired driving offence.

If we reduced the time span to a lower threshold between the call coming in from the public and the frontline officer intercepting the impaired driver, dispatchers could have a significant impact on impaired driving outcomes.

Using this information, we consolidated some of the sub-codes that differentiate between 911 calls and non-emergency calls to expedite response times for possible impaired drivers."

The HRPS also committed to enhancing dispatcher engagement by employing the use of internal multi-media messaging to remind all staff of the victimization caused by this crime.

This messaging graphically demonstrates the devastating outcomes of impaired driving, including damage to vehicles and property, results of roadside testing, and charges laid.

Next week, Part Two of Duraiappah's three-part column outlines the service's decision to publish the names of alleged impaired drivers as well as the service's strategic partnerships.

Nishan Duraiappah is the Halton Regional Police Service's Deputy Chief.

CHAMPION TRACKS



Joseph Yaworski photos

Ariana Lopes and Joseph Yaworski in Brazil, where they took in the sights and volunteered at a charity event held for more than 7,000 kids in Simoesia. The event was created and hosted by Thidy Lopes, Ariana's father. Going away? Pack a copy of the Champion in your suitcase, snap a creative photo and email your Champion Tracks submission to cohara@metroland.com. Please include everyone's name and destination information.



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