



COMMENT



THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Banning cell phones in cars over the top

The crash near Washington, D.C. that took the lives of four Quebecers has raised concerns about weather to regulate the use of cell phones by drivers.

A 20-year-old woman talking on her cell phone lost control of the large SUV she was driving for the first time and smashed into a minivan carrying the four Quebec seniors.

The inappropriate use of cell phones by drivers is part of a serious traffic safety problem — distractions can be dangerous behind the wheel.

Some say the solution is to ban drivers from using cell phones. While the safety initiative sounds reasonable at first, on second thought we disagree.

Careless driving laws are already in place to prosecute drivers who don't make the driving task their top priority. For example, Ontario drivers caught talking on cell phones, eating, reading or applying make-up are subject to a \$325 fine and six demerit points. Similar penalties apply in other provinces.

Instead of more legislation, we see a need for more public awareness and education, and strict enforcement of existing laws. Tips for drivers with cell phones appear on the Canada Safety Council's Web site and in its defensive driving courses.

Three speeding tickets in 15 minutes — just like that

Looking for some excitement (and to get out of the office for awhile), I accepted Const. Clive Hubbard's offer to tag a long with him for a ride-along Tuesday morning.

Recently, Const. Hubbard was assigned by Halton Regional Police to specifically handle all traffic complaints, especially speeding.

And now he wanted to show me exactly what it was he did.

We headed out of 12 Division and drove down to No. 5 Sideroad, near Tremaine Road. He told me No. 5 Sideroad was a hot spot for speeders, and we were bound to catch a few.

The problem was, the road was almost completely deserted, but he did manage to pull over one person who was doing over 90 km/h in the posted 60 km/h zone.

Never having been in a police car (we rode in a "plain" vehicle), I didn't quite know what to

expect as I sat down in the passenger seat.

The inside of the car was equipped with a computer, a radar scanner that sat on the dash board, as well as the see-through divider that separated the back and front seats.

Const. Hubbard showed me how the scanner on the dash worked, as well as the LIDAR speed measuring device (what I knew as a radar gun).

After driving up and down No. 5 Sideroad a few times, we headed out to Guelph Line to see the action in Brookville, another high-speed complaint zone.

That was a success, as Const. Hubbard handed out three speeding tickets in about 15 minutes.

Two of those speeders were caught with the LIDAR machine, which shows the speed of the car the machine is aimed at.

The radar scanner inside the car isn't as accurate (it just shows a car ahead is speeding, but



OUR READERS WRITE

Reader asks people to stop humiliating her as she really does need the handicap parking spot

Dear Editor:

I'm 26 years old and reside in Milton. Seven weeks ago, I underwent a tri-level spinal fusion due to a car accident April 30. I have a handicap parking permit due to the fact that I'm in a full torso brace and can't walk very fast or very far until the fusion has taken — usually five to six months.

Since I can't carry much more than 5 to 10 pounds, I pick a couple things up a few times a week at Loblaws or Zellers. I also have to get out to do banking now, too.

Well, my problem lies with the people in Milton. Every time — and I'm not exaggerating — I park in the handicap spot I'm

approached either in the parking lot or the store by complete strangers. I have been yelled at, sworn at and or reamed out by these strangers for parking in a handicap parking spot.

All these people see is a young person getting out of her car and walking into the store. They don't bother to look for my permit, which is clearly in the front windshield of my vehicle. People don't realize that you need not look handicap or be in a wheelchair to qualify as disabled and in need of a permit. I have not once been apologized to after explaining that I do in fact have a permit. I have been humiliated so many times that I'm now frustrated and don't feel like leaving my

home.

When I go to the park, I'm tempted to park in a normal spot just to avoid the confrontation. I'm in a great deal of pain from the operation and when I'm approached, I'm sensitive to what people are saying to me and I usually end up crying for hours later on. I just want people to keep to their own business and, if someone sees someone park in a handicap spot, at least look for a permit before approaching that person.

I'm at my wits-end with people who continuously harass and embarrass me when I'm out.

Christy Siddall
Milton



Random thoughts

with FANNIE SUNSHINE

doesn't single out a specific vehicle), but it did the job.

We then travelled into Campbellville, still sticking to Guelph Line, and caught one transport truck doing 83 in the 60 zone.

Const. Hubbard had to turn around and rush to catch up to the driver, who had vanished from eye sight a couple of times, but eventually managed

to pull him over.

I must say, I found the ride more interesting than I thought I would.

For starters, I thought we would be solely positioned on the side of the road with the LIDAR, but we spent the majority of the two-and-a-half hours riding around, looking for speed demons.

And when Const. Hubbard had to spin around and chase several of the speeders, I felt the excitement build inside me.

Although the new year has barely just begun, 560 speeding tickets have already been issued in town, and a total of 4,131 tickets were handed out last year.

Besides the monetary loss associated with speeding tickets, valuable points can also be lost, which can result in increased insurance.

It's worth it to slow down.