



# COMMENT



## THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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## Hey Milton, let's all be safe this long weekend

The holiday weekend is upon us and as always, Halton Regional Police will be out in full force with its RIDE program, hoping to curb and/or discourage impaired driving on area streets and highways.

Our hope for this weekend — a big fat zero count for drinking and driving incidents throughout Halton.

Our hope for the future — the day (hopefully not so far off) when Halton's RIDE program simply isn't necessary.

Neither wish is really much to ask.

Of all the problems plaguing our society, impaired driving is without question one of the most easily fixable. Wiping out this behaviour is simply a matter of exercising some consideration and common sense.

Unfortunately, we just can't seem to get everyone on board with these concepts.

In conjunction with this weekend's RIDE program, members of MADD's Halton/Peel chapter will hold an information and awareness blitz at various locations across both regions.

Of course their arguments are nothing new, but we encourage you not to just blow them off. Remember, many of these people have lost loved ones to drunk drivers. And even if they haven't, they're volunteering their time to publicize an important message.

Either way, they deserve to be heard.

## Understand that fairness can be a two-way street

Tsk, tsk, tsk.

By now most of us, if not all of us, know that Milton council has approved new smoking legislation, part of which permits designated smoking rooms (DSRs) in bars, restaurants, gaming facilities and horse tracks. It will take effect January 1, but doesn't force entrepreneurs to install DSRs.

That's probably the only truly fair thing about this new bylaw.

I say that because the issue of allowing smoking has become about fairness.

But for whom?

Fairness for business owners who say they've lost customers because the current bylaw prohibits smoking in bars and restaurants, and DSRs will bring them back?

Fairness for people who feel it's their right to be able to smoke in establishments because tobacco is a legally sold and consumed product?

Fairness for those who say they want the option to decide if they want to install DSRs?

If this was the first time a smoking bylaw was being introduced, then all these fairness issues make sense.

But that's not the case.

The current bylaw was in effect for nearly a year when council voted 6-4 last month to create a new smoking bylaw. The aforementioned issues of fairness have lost their shelf life.

Now, with the new smoking bylaw ready to roll next year, it poses a new question about fairness that might have been lost on some.

What about those businesses who choose to install DSRs but are subjected to watching their competitors, who don't have DSRs, allow smoking?

If you don't think that's going to happen, wake up.



## OUR READERS WRITE

### Reader says town council's recent change to smoking bylaw was truly disappointing

Dear Editor:

So now Milton has the worst smoking bylaw in the province of Ontario.

The mayor and the five members of council who supported this bylaw must be proud of themselves. While every other jurisdiction in North America is trying to eliminate smoking in public places and reduce the exposure to dangerous second-hand smoke, those six members of council voted to increase smoking in the bars and restaurants of Milton.

Milton went from having one of the best bylaws to reduce public exposure to tobacco smoke to having the worst.

There was no need to change the existing bylaw. The bar and restaurant owners didn't ask for these changes.

I believe the citizens of Milton have been influenced by the lobbying of the tobacco company.

We're all proud when Milton is awarded recognition for certain activities, but it's disappointing to be rated as the town with one of the

worst bylaws — as stated by Michael Perley, director of Ontario Action on Tobacco.

What an accomplishment, thanks to the senseless six. I think all other responsible councils will allow us to keep this notoriety.

It may be time to consider changes to council by electing people who'll truly represent the wishes of the people rather than give in to the demands of small and vocal special interest groups.

Del Oxford  
Milton

E-mail your letters to the editor to [miltomed@haltonsearch.com](mailto:miltomed@haltonsearch.com).



### The big picture

with JASON MISNER

The current bylaw clearly states no smoking is allowed in a bar or restaurant. But Milton bylaw officers have found, and charged on numerous occasions, business owners for illegally allowing smoking indoors.

Bylaw officers — another issue unto itself because of the few number of them in town — will now have to work diligently to ensure that

come January 1, entrepreneurs who spent tens of thousands of dollars for DSRs are getting their money's worth knowing that non-DSR establishments are abiding by the law.

If that's not a fairness issue, I don't know what is.

Milton council, in passing the new bylaw, made a clear statement that smoking will be banned across town come 2009. And I applaud that part of the bylaw. It certainly builds on the current one.

But that's — hang on, let me count — five years away from taking effect.

In the meantime, it's my contention that businesses which built expensive DSRs will approach councillors next year, complaining other businesses are permitting smoking while not having sunk tons of money into erecting DSRs.

Fairness can be a two-way street.