

# Number of Halton police collisions higher than usual

While part of the job of Halton police is to watch how others are driving, a recently-released report is reminding officers to keep their own eyes on the road.

The 2008 Police Vehicle Collision Summary Report, which was presented to the Halton Regional Police Services Board on Friday, found that in the first six months of 2008 there were a total of 66 service vehicle collisions of which 44 have been deemed preventable.

The reasons for the preventable collisions are listed as follows.

- In three incidents officers were following too close.
- In six incidents officers were driving too fast for conditions.
- In 26 incidents officers failed to make sure the way was clear before they moved their vehicle.
- In one incident an officer failed to obey a sign.
- In one incident an officer made an improper turn.
- In two incidents officers failed to yield the right of way.

• In one incident the officer backed up improperly.

Four other incidents fell into the miscellaneous category.

Halton Police Chief Gary Crowell, the report's author, noted that this year's collision total is higher than average with 50 collisions taking place during the same period of 2007, 37 taking place during the same period in 2006 and 52 taking place during the same period in 2005.

The damage cost of this year's collisions was also higher than usual, the report noted, with nearly \$158,000 in damage being tallied.

The report further noted that this cost figure may not be complete as there are seven incidents where damage cost confirmations are pending and two incidents where repair costs are estimated.

Last winter's extreme conditions are pointed to in the report as a possible contributing factor to this year's service vehicle collision increase, with several officers indicating icy, snowy and/or wet roads at the time of their accident.

Whatever the reason for the increased collisions, Crowell is looking to bring them to an end and is hoping a driver training pilot project is up to the task.

"A driver training pilot project, aimed at reducing preventable collisions, was conducted with recruits and officers completing sessions," said Crowell in the report.

"The project was successfully received and indicated potential to improve driving abilities, awareness and attitudes. The approved project will continue for up to two years for new recruits and those identified as requiring remedial driver training.

"As the program proceeds, staff will continue to monitor results, gather information and explore options to further reduce preventable collisions."

A Collision Review Committee is also reviewing all incidents listed in this year's service vehicle collision report in an effort to determine the problems officers are having and how to prevent them.

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