

MADD Canada calls for creation of codes of conduct

MADD CEO says he has seen rash of drunk driving charges handed down to elected officials

By Christina Commisso
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

MADD Canada is calling on all levels of

government to implement codes of conduct for elected officials to deal with impaired driving and other criminal charges.

Andrew Murie, CEO of MADD, said in the

last six months he has seen a rash of drunk driving charges handed down to elected officials.

"It's become very clear that council needs to figure this out and have rules that govern conduct," he said.

Asked about Milton local and regional councillor Tony Lambert, who last month pled guilty to impaired driving, Murie said MADD has received "a ton" of comments regarding the conviction and requests for his resignation.

Murie said, however, it's not MADD's place to ask a councillor to step down — that's up to the public.

"I wish these regional councils had a code of conduct so that there's not all this fuss that goes on," he said. "Most employers have codes of conduct, if an employee does X here's what you can expect from the employer."

"The code of conduct might simply say if you're charged with a criminal offence or you're convicted of a criminal offence you must resign your position, no ifs or buts about it."

Currently the Municipal Act doesn't require a councillor to resign when charged with a criminal offence.

Both Milton and Halton Region have developed council codes of conduct that outline the rules around accepting gifts, use of publicly-owned property and conduct during council and committee meetings. But neither address councillors' behaviour outside of chambers.

Murie said the public has higher expectations when it comes to how elected officials conduct themselves in their personal lives.

"It's one of the consequences of running for office. It's the same as when a police officer is charged with a criminal offense. People are outraged because these people are supposed to uphold the law."

Earlier this month, Edmonton East Conservative MP left the Tory caucus after being charged with refusing to take a breathalyzer. This past summer, Newmarket Councillor Chris Emanuel pled guilty to impaired driving but didn't step down.

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