

**SAFETY:** More than 5,500 ticketed in York Region

## Police blitz distracted drivers

BY JOE FANTAUZZI  
jfantauzzi@yrmg.com

His eyes trained on an oncoming black Toyota and his arm cocked, pointing a speed gun, Const. Andrew Smokum watched the car pass through the enforcement zone Monday morning.

The driver, however, may not have noticed the York Regional Police traffic officer, due to the electronic device he was holding in front of his face.

As the car whizzed past on McCowan Road, just north of Bullock Drive in Markham, Const. Babak Hashemi sped off in pursuit, eventually pulling over the vehicle in a nearby community centre parking lot.

It has been about 21 months since the distracted driving law, which can lighten your wallet by \$155 if you're caught using a hand-held device, took effect. After a three-month grace period, during which offending drivers were warned about their behaviour, police began laying charges Feb. 1, 2010.

Despite that, a number of drivers seen Monday in Markham seemed not to be phased by the legislation — or its potential penalties.

And police have noticed. York police have written 5,574 tickets for distracted driving since February 2010, 3,013 of them between January and June this year.

"We see this every day. It's unfortunate," Const. Hashemi lamented.

"They're in the car (and) because they're on the phone, they don't realize what's going on around them," he said as a steady stream of pedestrians crossed McCowan.

The driver of the Toyota? He was ticketed

for distracted driving, not carrying his driver's information and violating the terms of his G1 licence by not driving with a fully licenced motorist, Const. Hashemi said.

York officers will continue writing tickets until drivers comply with the law, Sgt. Ed Villamere said. Many motorists initially flouted seatbelt laws, but today, about 90 per cent of York motorists buckle up, he noted.

There's no escape on the major routes if you want to drive and talk or text.

Ontario Provincial Police have launched a simultaneous crackdown on the highways that lasts until Sunday. OPP will stop and ticket motorists using a hand-held device, such as a cellphone or other entertainment gadgets.

They will also target motorists who drive carelessly because they are adjusting the radio, eating while driving or searching for something in their vehicle.

Last year across the province, OPP officers responded to 7,733 collisions where the driver was deemed to be inattentive or distracted. Those crashes resulted in 35 deaths, 1,040 injuries and a lot of property damage.

Meanwhile, back on McCowan, Const. Smokum stops a grey Honda for speeding, clocked at 80 km/h in the posted 60 km/h zone.

Enforcing speed limits continues to be important because of the number of people using public transit — which often involves pedestrians running from one side of a road to another, while dodging cars and trying to get ahead of GO Trains in their path, he said.

A driver using a cellphone is more likely to be involved in a crash than a motorist focused on driving, police say.

ACURA PRESENTS

START YOUR SUMMER WITH A GREAT DEAL.

ACURA

2011 MDX  
STARTING FROM \$54,720\*



MONTHLY PAYMENT

**\$598<sup>†</sup>**

INCLUDES FREIGHT, PDI & FEES  
\$7,750 DOWN PAYMENT

LEASE FOR 39 MOS AT

**1.0%<sup>†</sup>**

NORMAL LEASE APR

FOR INFORMATION ONLY

**5.2%<sup>†</sup>**

EFFECT LEASE APR FOR 39 MOS

OR **\$5,000** CASH PURCHASE INCENTIVE<sup>†</sup>

Selling price and payment include freight, PDI, EHF tires and filters, A/C tax, and OMVIC fee, and exclude taxes. \*Selling price is \$54,720 on a new 2011 Acura MDX (Model YD2H2B.N). Price includes \$1,895 freight and PDI, EHF tires (\$29), EHF filters (\$1), air conditioning tax (\$100) and OMVIC fee (\$6). License, insurance, registration, and taxes (including HST and tax for fuel conservation, if applicable) are extra. †Limited time lease offer for 2011 Acura MDX (Model YD2H2B.N) available through Honda Financial Services Inc. on approved credit. Representative lease example: 1.0% nominal lease rate for 39 months / 5.2% effective lease rate for 39 months. Monthly payment is \$598 with \$7,750 down payment, and with \$1,895 freight and PDI, EHF tires (\$29), EHF filters (\$1), air conditioning tax (\$100) and OMVIC fee (\$6) included. First monthly payment, \$0 security deposit and \$400 tax for fuel conservation due at lease inception if applicable. Total lease obligation is \$31,472. 78,000-kilometre allowance, charge of \$0.15/km for excess kilometres. ‡\$5,000 cash incentive available to cash customers on a new 2011 Acura MDX (Model YD2H2B.N). Cash incentive offer will be deducted from the negotiated price before taxes and cannot be combined with special finance or lease offers. Offers only valid for Ontario residents at Ontario Acura dealers. Retailer may sell/lease for less. Retailer order/trade may be necessary. Vehicles are for illustration purposes only. Offers subject to change without notice. See your Acura retailer for full details.



MARKHAM ACURA



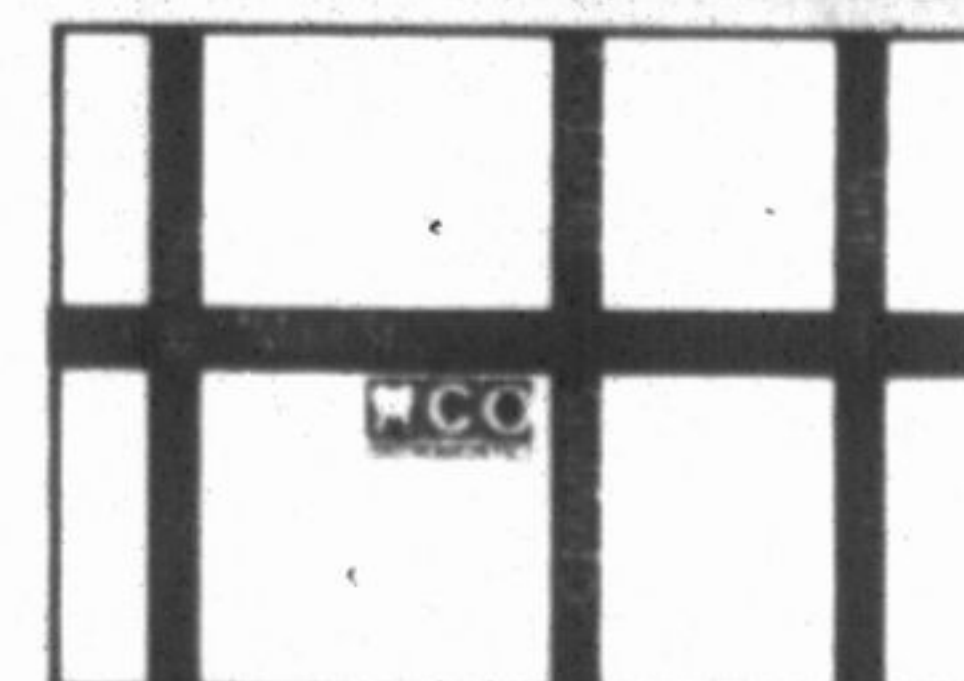
**MCO**  
ORTHODONTICS

**MCO Orthodontics - Your Stouffville Orthodontist**

*We are happy to offer:*

- Complimentary one-hour consultations including digital x-rays, digital photos, and a comprehensive exam.
- Invisalign, Invisalign Teen, clear braces, metal braces, and inside braces
- Orthodontic treatment for adults and children

*TeamMCO looks forward to becoming your choice for orthodontic care in Stouffville and to participating in our growing community!*



In the RBC and  
McDonald's plaza

28 Sandiford Drive Unit 1 • Stouffville • 905.642.5618 • [www.mcosmiles.com](http://www.mcosmiles.com)