

**“People were angry at the rules that said if you’re 50 kilometres over the speed limit, we’ll take your car for a week. But then we saw 350 fewer fatalities on our roads year over year. You can’t argue with that.”**

**Brian Patterson**  
president of the Ontario Safety League

York Regional Police Chief Eric Jolliffe, along with Ontario Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca (left) and Newmarket/Aurora MPP Chris Ballard, walk across a crosswalk at the Community Safety Village during a press conference yesterday.



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

## Bigger fines for drivers on phones

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and 2,700 for careless driving.

In 2012, Ontario saw 80 deaths resulting from distracted driving.

“People are not getting the message and if it requires increased fines for people to think twice, then so be it,” he said. “Our ultimate mandate is to protect the community from harm, whether it be crime or road safety. It’s all equally important.”

Brian Patterson, president of the Newmarket-based Ontario Safety League, said those who oppose the rules due to their harshness, remind him of those who yelled the loudest prior to the government introduc-

ing stunt racing rules in 2010.

“People were angry at the rules that said if you’re 50 kilometres over the speed limit, we’ll take your car for a week,” he said, noting he heard many of them speak on talk radio. “But then we saw 350 fewer fatalities on our roads year over year. You can’t argue with that.”

Patterson added that he also believes the legislation will bring the severity of the event in line with the judicial consequences.

“I was at an international event a few years ago and they couldn’t believe we (Ontario) didn’t have demerit points for distracted driving already,” he added. “After all, the consequences of distracted driving are crashes and fatalities.”

Transportation Minister and Vaughan MPP Steven Del Duca congratulated lawmakers on passing the bill unanimously and said it was about time we recognized the risks inherent to distracted driving.

He added he has two daughters, one age eight and one four, and he hopes they will be safer as a result.

Del Duca further noted the rules are justified considering distracted driving is now as big a problem in this province as impaired driving.

The law will also include other components, including “move over” legislation that forces drivers to give cyclists one metre worth of space where possible and asks that drivers change lanes or slow down when emergency vehicles and, now, tow trucks, are working on the side of our roadways.

Fines and demerit points will also be introduced for motorists that “door” cyclists.

Finally, the law also stipulates school buses are the only vehicles allowed to be coloured a particular shade of yellow.

The Community Safety Village, in Bruce’s Mill Conservation Area, was selected as the site of the conference because of its unique message of safety, which has witnessed more than 500,000 students learn about road and community safety.

Chief Jolliffe said the Stouffville Road site is privately funded and allows police to engage with children about safety in a safe and unique setting.

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