

Older drivers can develop bad habits on the road

By Alessandra Micieli

Drivers young and old should consider paying attention more often to the roads, especially in commuter towns, such as Bolton.

In 2012, Allstate completed an Ontario safe driving study, which revealed that Bolton had 5.28 collisions per 100 vehicles. On the other hand, Bolton has also seen an almost 13 per cent decrease in collision claims over the past couple of years.

Councillor Patti Foley said with the decrease, the town is headed in the right direction.

"While our ranking within the GTA may have been the top-20 worst, in the context of Ontario overall, we fared better," said Foley of the study. "We scored better than Toronto at 6.12 and the GTA overall, which was 5.63."

Foley said collision rates within the GTA may have to do with the fact most towns or cities have high amounts of commuters.

"I believe that the higher collision rates in the GTA area in general are partially a result of volume of traffic," said Foley. "Ontario's largest density of population and industry are here."

Foley added today's lifestyle choices may contribute to more accidents. Rushing to get to places and other distractions may hinder one's driving ability. Also, bad habits can be a factor for an unintended collision.

Rizwan Malik, 32, is a driving instructor for All Star Driving School in Bolton. Malik said many older or experienced drivers have bad habits on the road and those can contribute to or cause a collision.

"I feel driving school would be a perfect way to encourage bad adult drivers to improve," said Malik.

Malik said when new drivers attend driving school, they are equipped with the knowledge and skills to be a safe driver. Driving instructors, like Malik, want to infuse the importance of good driving habits, so it becomes second nature to always be responsible, as well as safe.

Bolton resident Ryan White, a constable with Toronto Police, said that over six years of being a police officer, he has noticed a big trend with reported collisions involves a lack of driving experience and distractions.

"Many rear-end accidents could be prevented if drivers paid better attention to driving conditions," said White.

He added the statistics are surprising to him. He also attributed the number of collisions to the commuting circumstances. White stated that most collisions happen within 30 minutes of a person's home, since the area acts as a "safe-zone."

"You don't pay as much attention," White said.

Along with taking additional driving courses, there are a few other tips one can follow to become a better driver.

White advised making use of the hands-free options available in vehicles.

"Pay attention at the task at hand to get from point A to B," said White. "Additionally, drive within your capabilities."

Also, White advised drivers to be cautionary towards yellow lights.

"Treat amber lights as stop lights, as opposed to speeding up," he said, adding many people aren't aware of the fact that running an amber light can get them a ticket as well.

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