

Police are watching out for distracted drivers this week

Over March break, Ontario Provincial Police are highly focused on what has been the deadliest kind of driver on OPP-patrolled roads for the fifth consecutive year ? the inattentive driver.

Inattentive drivers were behind 83 road fatalities on OPP-patrolled roads in 2017, surpassing speed-related deaths (75), alcohol/drug-related deaths (46) and those that are linked to lack of seat belt use (49).

Since 2009 (the year distracted driving laws took effect in Ontario), 692 people have been killed on OPP-patrolled roads in collisions that involved an inattentive driver.

?By now, the majority of drivers and passengers have witnessed, had a close call or been involved in a collision with a driver who was texting, talking on their cell phone or engaged in some other form of distraction,? OPP Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair said.

?Last year, the OPP responded to 8,711 crashes that were linked to driver inattention.?

If convicted of distracted driving, a fully licenced driver will receive a fine of \$400, plus a victim surcharge and court fee, for a total of \$490 if settled out of court, a fine of up to \$1,000 if they receive a summons or fight the ticket and three demerit points.

Drivers who endanger others because of any distraction, including hand-held and hands-free devices, may still be charged with careless driving under the Highway Traffic Act or even dangerous driving under the Criminal Code of Canada. Both charges carry heavy fines and penalties.