

Ontario passes legislation to improve road safety

On Tuesday June 2, the Ontario Legislature passed the ***Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act*** to amend the *Highway Traffic Act*. The highlights are as follows:

- Increase fines for distracted driving from the current range of \$60 to \$500 to a range of \$300 to \$1,000, assigning three demerit points upon conviction, and escalating sanctions on convictions for novice drivers. (This is in response to current collision trends which indicate fatalities from distracted driving may exceed those from drinking and driving by 2016.)
- Require drivers to wait until pedestrians have completely crossed the road before proceeding at school crossings and pedestrian crossovers.
- Apply current alcohol-impaired sanctions to drivers who are drug impaired.
- Introduce additional measures to address repeat offenders of alcohol impaired driving.
- Increase fines and demerits for drivers who 'door' cyclists, and require all drivers to maintain a minimum distance of one-metre when passing cyclists where possible.
- Help municipalities collect unpaid fines by expanding licence plate denial for drivers who don't pay certain Provincial Offences Act fines.
- Allow a broader range of qualified medical professionals to identify and report medically unfit drivers, and clarify the types of medical conditions to be reported.
- Expanding the current 'Slow Down, Move Over' requirement for motorists beyond only emergency vehicles with red or red and blue flashing lights to include tow trucks that are stopped at roadside incidents while their amber flashing lights are activated.
- Allowing the Motor Vehicle Inspection Station (MVIS) program to move to a contractual model and enable the procurement of a third-party contract administrator.
- Clarifying that School Buses are the only buses that can be painted chrome yellow in whole or in part.

These new and measures and fines will come into force over the coming months on dates to be announced.