



AIRDRIE RANKS AS WORST CITY FOR DISTRACTED DRIVING, SAYS STUDY

Police in Alberta say province needs tougher penalties against practice

A study of eight communities across Alberta has found that distracted driving rates in Airdrie are well above the norm, according to the Airdrie City View. Although it is unclear why Airdrie drivers are more likely to be talking or texting on a cell phone when behind the wheel, researchers said it might be because so many people in the area commute into Calgary. The study comes as police chiefs throughout Alberta say the province needs tougher laws to combat car accidents caused by distracted driving.

Airdrie drivers distracted

The study was conducted by the Alberta Motor Association and eight Citizens on Patrol organizations throughout Alberta. Volunteers analyzed the driving behaviour of motorists in Airdrie, Crowsnest Pass, Devon, Didsbury, Pincher Creek, Sherwood Park, Wabamun, and Westlock at various times during the summer.

In the seven communities aside from Airdrie, the distracted driving rate was 2.4 percent of drivers. In Airdrie, however, that rate spiked to 14.5 percent of all drivers. While expressing surprise by the high distracted driving rate in the community, analysts said it may be due to the high number of commuters in the area. During long drives into Calgary, some commuters may try to avoid "wasting time" by making calls or checking their email when behind the wheel.

Tougher penalties needed

Those sobering statistics come as an increasing number of police chiefs across Alberta say the province needs to stiffen its laws against distracted driving. The Edmonton police chief was the latest such person to voice his support for tougher penalties, for which the Alberta Association of Chiefs of Police has long been advocating, according to CBC News.

Specifically, they say that Alberta needs to introduce demerit points for distracted driving. Currently, drivers are only subject to a fine, leading many distracted drivers to view the citations as little more than an annoyance. Demerit points have much more serious consequences and enough of them could lead to a driver having his or her license suspended. Most other provinces and territories have introduced demerit points for distracted driving.

Motor vehicle accidents

By now, most people know how dangerous using a cellphone when driving is, yet far too many continue to falsely believe that they are the exception and are somehow better at multitasking than other drivers. Distracted driving, and other forms of negligent and reckless behaviour when behind the wheel, is a significant threat to everybody who uses Alberta's roads and highways.

Anybody who has been injured in a car accident, including those caused by distracted drivers, should talk to a personal injury lawyer to discuss their case. A dedicated legal team can offer the advice victims of accidents need in order to understand what rights and options they have moving forward.

PEFANIS HORVATH

1310 11th Street Southwest

Calgary, AB T2R 1G6

Toll Free: 403-444-5880

Local: 403-444-5880

Fax: 403-444-5879