



P2 | Should we have a Distracted Walking ban?



P2 | Have you heard of the zipper method of driving?



P3 | Don't get doored when you are cycling!

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CARRANZA LLP Spring 2017 Newsletter

Pedestrian safety: Slip and falls on Toronto streets

Despite the mild winter, we have seen an increase in slip and fall accidents this year. It makes sense — the weather is mild, so it rains, and then the temperature drops so the wet ground freezes, and then it snows and there is ice under the snow. This leads to more people slipping and falling on surfaces that they don't realize are icy.

If you have suffered serious injuries as a result of a fall or another accident, you should contact a lawyer as soon as possible. You should also:

- Seek medical attention immediately.
 - Report the accident as soon as possible to the person responsible for the premises.
 - Write down the names and addresses of any witnesses and keep them in a safe place.
 - Take pictures of where the accident occurred, and date them.
- Improvements to unsafe conditions are often made by the owner after an accident occurs to prevent it from happening again, but no record is kept of the situation at the time of the accident. Contemporaneous photographs can be vitally important.
- If your accident involved slipping or falling, keep the shoes that you were wearing, and if possible, stop wearing them, so that the condition of the treads at the time of the accident is preserved.



Pedestrian safety: what do you think of a distracted walking ban?

According to a recent episode of the CBC radio programme, **The Current**, a poll suggests a majority of Canadians would support a distracted walking ban. This includes Toronto city councillor Shelley Carroll, who voted in favour of a ban in Toronto because she says it's a serious safety issue for pedestrians in the city.

"A ban generally isn't enforced every minute of the day, but what it does give us is a wide and resourced education program to impose a ban. You know you get to ... educate people that this can be fatal."

Gil Penalosa, founder and chair of 8 80 Cities, says "Our streets are not safe. In Toronto, a person is being hit by a car every three hours on average 365 days of the year. That is not civilized."

8 80 Cities is a Toronto-based non-profit organization that looks at livable cities, sustainable mobility and public space. They advocate for creating a city that is good for an 8-year-old as well as for an 80-year-old, as only then will we have truly created a city for everyone.

Mr. Penalosa says there are many ways to make pedestrians safe, but he doesn't believe a distracted walking ban is one of them. He suggested to *The Current's* host, Anna Maria Tremonti, a few ways to help make cities safer for pedestrians, including building sidewalks in all neighbourhoods.

Mr. Penalosa had some interesting suggestions for increasing pedestrian safety in Toronto. What do you think of these ideas?

1. Require sidewalks in all neighbourhoods (he said that 1 in 4 residential streets in Toronto do not have sidewalks);
2. Lower the speed limit in all residential streets to 30km/hr or less (as it is in front of schools);
3. Install small islands in crosswalks — in case people can't cross within one light;
4. Eliminate turns on red in all urban areas.

"This is happening in cities of 5,000 people, 50,000, a million, three million."

"We must make pedestrians a top priority in every single community."

Driving safely: have you heard of the zipper method?

Have you heard of the zipper method of merging? According to data collected by two large cities in the U.S., this is the safest and most efficient way of merging when there is a lane closed in a construction zone, for example.

The word 'zipper' refers to both lanes of traffic being fully utilized until reaching the defined merge area, at which time the two lanes would take turns going ahead into the open lane, zipper-fashion.

This is safer and more efficient because it reduces the differences in speed between the two lanes (e.g. you will sometimes see cases where the majority of drivers will merge into the 'open' lane early, and other drivers will speed ahead to the end of the lane that is closing — often moving too quickly).



Alternate When Merging

Many drivers feel that it is a considerate move to merge early when you see a lane closed up ahead (and therefore, many feel that it is rude to speed up and go to the end of the lane and then merge). However, we hope that with further education about the zipper method, more people will begin to use it and hopefully increase the safety and efficiency of our roads!



Cycling safely in Toronto

According to the cycling advocacy group, Cycle Toronto, incidents of dooring are on the rise in Toronto. Dooring occurs when a cyclist traveling on a city street is hit by an opening car door.

Cycle Toronto stated in a press release that the number of dooring collisions went up in 2015 and 2016. According to data provided to them by Toronto police:

- there were 132 dooring incidents in 2014;
- 175 in 2015; and
- 209 in 2016.

In its statement, Cycle Toronto said the dooring numbers “should be considered minimums” because they are only the incidents that were reported to police.

Streets in the downtown core of Toronto that have streetcar tracks and street parking are “overrepresented in the data, with particular emphasis on Queen St. W and College St.,” according to Cycle Toronto.

Streets that do not have streetcar tracks that were noted to be particularly problematic for cyclists included Bloor Street West and Yonge Street, which are obviously busy streets and were said to be “popular drop-off and pick-up areas.”

Cycle Toronto offers the following tips to help avoid dooring:

- For drivers: Use your right hand, what’s known as the Dutch reach, when opening your car door. Always look over your shoulder before opening your door;
- For cyclists: Avoid riding in the door zone by riding at least one metre from parked vehicles.



Canadian Athletes Now Fund

We recently had the pleasure of attending the Canadian Athletes Now Fund’s one year Olympics countdown interactive cocktail party.

Canadian Athletes Now Fund (CAN Fund) supports Canadian Athletes training for the Olympics. Since 2003 CAN Fund has raised over \$22 million for Canadian athletes. At each of the Sochi, London and Vancouver Games, CAN Fund supported 80% of the Canadian team. This event was a fundraiser to support Canadian Olympians and National Team Athletes, as well as an opportunity to mingle and play with them in their respective sports.

We sure won’t be competing in the Olympics next year, but we can’t wait to cheer on these talented athletes!



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