

Dear committee members,

Thank you for taking the time to read my comments.

What do I think are the reasons for an increase in vehicle accidents in Saskatchewan?

The first reason would be an increase in population and traffic. No longer do we go on grid roads and highways that had little to no traffic. There are more farm trucks, semi-trailers, motorhomes, motorcycles, campers, and cars. A statistic that should be looked at is the number of traffic deaths that involve semi-trailers. How experienced were the drivers? Truck drivers I know comment on the experience and ethics of the "new breed" of truck drivers.

"Lack of skill and knowledge" was a comment on my first driver's test that I failed at age 16. This could not have been truer and I believe is a major cause of the increase in accidents today. Driving on icy roads with cruise control on would be an example of lack of knowledge. Failing to negotiate a turn or gain control after a skid are examples of lack of skill. We have an increase in drivers from other countries and they may lack the skill to drive during winter conditions. Young drivers are much too aggressive when driving during adverse weather and road conditions. Offensive driving has become the norm rather than defensive driving.

Speed is probably the biggest accident factor. Many drivers think they are driving safely if they are exceeding the speed limit by 10k/hour. Road conditions this past year many times did not warrant the speed limit yet drivers continued to ignore the danger of speed. Taking the chance to pass is obviously one of the major factors with head on collisions. Everyone assumes the approaching vehicle is going somewhere around the speed limit.

No doubt you will get many letters from groups like "MAD" who will blame the increase onto impaired driving. I have dealt with statistics all my life and know how they can be manipulated to prove a point. It should be noted that even if the drinking driver is not at fault the statistic will show alcohol was involved. I believe we have enough laws to deal with drinking and driving. The penalties can be devastating. A friend of my daughters recently got a DUI and lost his job as a result. He and his wife had to sell their home to make ends meet. He now has a criminal record, is unemployed and has lost his home as a result of the .08 law.

A nephew of mine got a DUI even though he was just sleeping in his vehicle outside the bar. He was not driving but was waiting to sober up. The police checked him and gave him a DUI. He was a truck driver and could see no way out with a wife and two kids. He committed suicide a week later. These are just a couple stories that make me think we have enough law when prosecuting those who drink and drive.

I would also like to know if the new headlamps have been the cause of some night time accidents. Personally they almost blind me when meeting several in a row, especially around curves in the road.

Passing lanes would no doubt help prevent head on collisions. Following farm implements, camper trailers and slow moving vehicles makes many drivers impatient. Many will take a chance to pass and force the on-coming vehicle to the shoulder.

Thank you for your time

Al Propp

