

To:
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From:
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I think the best way to improve traffic safety is to have all drivers tested once every 5-10 years, and after each accident. This idea was around when I took driver training in 1980, but has never been implemented. Especially with the recent emphasis on safety, having safe drivers in the first place is a better way to address the problem. Personally, I would have to study some rules in order to pass an exam now – I don't believe I would be able to fool the Driver Examiner.

I think this system should be funded by the cost of the exams, that is, the price of the exam, and of the driver's licence, would be high enough to cover the cost of administering the system. If the exam is failed, the driver must pay for and take a Driver Education course. In the case of drivers having many accidents, they would also be required to take a Driver Education course, and pay for its full cost.

Some have suggested only having a mandatory exam for those who had an accident, so the reward for driving accident free would be no test. However, this does not deal with those drivers who are on the borderline, and manage to stay out of accidents, but who might not pass an exam. Having an exam for everyone, every 5-10 years at least, would be much more thorough.

We need to understand that driving is a privilege, not a right, and that just because we let everyone do it, does not mean everyone can.

I'm not a fan of more rules, lower speeds, photo radar, red-light cameras or anything that impedes the flow of traffic.

We seem to forget that traffic is like water, it flows where it can, when it can, whenever it needs to. Trying to dam water only means dealing with it somewhere else. Any rule that tries to impede traffic only means another system to deal with the consequences, whether intended or not, of the original rule.

I am a fan of education. Improving education about traffic safety will improve traffic safety.

More rules are not the answer, but education is. Red light cameras are an example. Fair warning about red lights always used to be given. When I took Driver Ed. in 1980, I was taught the two separate warning systems in place at every intersection. The first is that the flashing "Don't Walk" signals stopped flashing a few seconds before the amber traffic light appeared. That is, you knew it was a stale green light, if the crosswalk signals stopped flashing. Driving through the intersection meant the risk of running a red light. However, the second system also helped drivers. The solid white line painted on the road at every intersection indicated that if you were within that space, you could still drive, at 50 kmh, through the intersection before the amber signal ended, even if the crosswalk light had stopped flashing. For some reason, in the last few years, those who install the pedestrian signals didn't know about these systems, and now many crosswalk lights continue flashing until the traffic signal turns red, or use the countdown system. If the original separate systems operated according to their design, there would be no need for cameras.

Education will reduce the need for more rules, more laws, and more regulations. Plus, education is much more efficient at encouraging traffic safety, while more laws and regulations are not.

Yours truly,

Peter

P.S. I did speak with Mr. Quaye at SGI a number of years ago, at least prior to 2004, and my summary of our telephone conversation is: He nixed the idea of a mandatory driver's licence exam. In his experience there is not enough interest in an exam as a safety concern. There are other more pressing issues, and not enough justification for this one. You can't design a test to truly show the wrongs of the driver, i.e., they can bluff it. There is not a safety issue with senior drivers, and there is a system already for all drivers, when they have enough accidents, to be examined. No jurisdiction has mandatory exams, or is even considering it, or even researching it. He would have no funding for the idea. So this is a dead end for now.