

Gorski Consulting Website

Archived News - 2016 - January

January 30, 2016

Dangerous Cocktail of Excessive Speed And Variable Road Surface Conditions Served Up To Southern Ontario Drivers

In South-Western Ontario the winter of 2015-16 has been quite mild, so far. However its dangers are no less evident. January 29th, 2016 provided drivers with an environment of differing road surface conditions that demonstrated there is no such thing as “The Road Conditions”, as some arm chair experts claim. It is the varying road conditions, that are unpredictable, that cause many serious accidents during winters in Southern Ontario. In this environment there are drivers who refuse to accept that they cannot predict what lies ahead and continue to speed along wet, damp and even dry road surfaces oblivious to the fact that those conditions change very rapidly. One of many examples can be found in the photos that are presented below of a collision that occurred in the late afternoon of January 27, 2016 on Perth Road 113 just north of Perth Road 26. This area is located just south-west of Stratford, Ontario.

With respect to the collision, the photo below shows the typical road conditions as drivers travelled southbound on Perth Road 113 toward the accident site.



Note the surface of Perth Road 113 just north of the accident site is bare and slightly damp but otherwise in excellent condition. Such conditions lull drivers into the belief that they do not need to pay attention to conditions that might rapidly change.

As noted above the road surface was bare and slightly damp or otherwise in excellent condition. This would prompt typical drivers to drive at speeds similar to those under summertime conditions. The drawback is that many drivers fail to understand that road surface conditions can deteriorate without the driver being able to detect the degree of deterioration until it is too late. Thus vigilance and a readiness to reduce speed is extremely important.

The photo below shows a closer view toward the accident site where it is possible to detect that some snow may have drifted onto the road surface. Often drivers are either not alert to such developments or misjudge the possibility that the road surface may be much worse than the information that is presently known.



If a driver was sufficiently alert, a look into the distance of this photograph would reveal the potential that snow might have drifted onto the road surface. The problem is that the driver does not know how much snow might have been drifted and whether a drastic reduction in speed is necessary. It is at this point of uncertainty that a driver must assume that conditions are worse than they may appear.

As we approach closer to the accident site the photo below shows that the road surface has definitely become snow-covered. However, even at this location, the quantity or depth of snow on the road cannot be appreciated.



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The existence of vehicles on the shoulders, along with the flashing lights of a police cruiser indicate that an incident has occurred. These facts would normally cause drivers to slow down. However without those cues, and left with an empty roadway drivers looking at the road surface would not fully comprehend the quantity of snow that may exist on the road. It is at this point that driver's fail to be cautious, lacking the knowledge that significant snow drifts can exist with deep snow that can cause a driver to lose directional control of a vehicle. Steering and braking inputs that may appear to be minor on a bare road can be sufficient to destabilize a vehicle travelling in deep snow therefore it is crucial to perform those adjustments before entering such a snow drift.

The photo below shows one of the vehicles on the east shoulder. It has frontal damage to its bumper however other structures such as the hood and fenders appear to have minimal or no damage. This suggests there has been a glancing, sideswiping, type of impact indicative of a likely pre-crash, loss-of-control, rotation.



Upon approaching the vehicles on the shoulder it is apparent that the vehicle on the left has frontal damage as the bumper cover is missing. However there is a lack of significant crush to the vehicle's structure indicating a glancing blow.

The photo below shows the other vehicle that was involved in the impact which is located on the west shoulder. There was damage to its right rear wheel yet there was no obvious damage to its front end. This confirms that at least one of the impacting vehicle's had entered into a state of loss-of-control prior to impact.



Although not apparent from this southward view, the Ford Escape on the west shoulder sustained damage to its right-rear wheel. Without any other visible damage to its front end it confirms that there has been a loss-of-control of at least one of the vehicles which has led the impact.

The obvious point, when we look at the last two photos, is the extent of snow cover on the road surface. The first photos showed how there was absolutely no snow on the road yet here we see substantial snow. It is likely that one or both of the drivers may have misjudged the quantity of snow that had drifted on the road and this was likely a factor in the event.

The photo below shows the road surface conditions just south of the area of impact. Small areas of drifting are seen in the background but generally the road surface returns to bare and damp conditions.



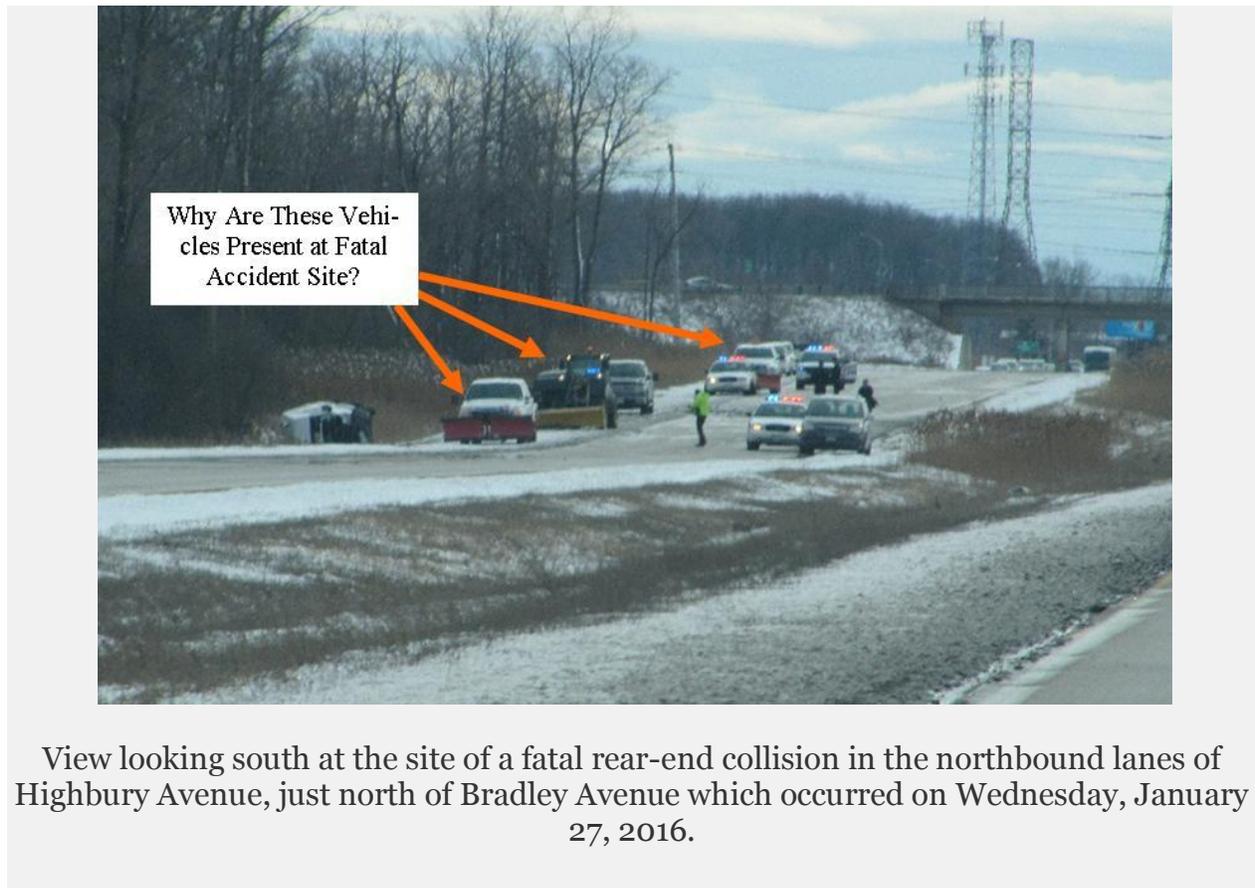
View looking south from just south of the collision site. The road surface returns to bare and damp conditions in the background.

In summary, many police and safety experts instruct drivers to “drive for the road conditions” as if such sage advice will change the habits and actions of drivers. Clearly such comments exemplify the ignorance of those experts. We have stated on numerous occasions that there is no such thing as a single road condition and suggesting such thoughts to drivers confirms that ignorance. Drivers must be informed that road conditions change, they do not stay the same. They must be informed that, if they wait to react after they have already entered a snow drift, it is already too late and the best option is to do essentially do nothing in terms of braking or steering.

In winter, the road condition that is presently visible is likely to change and it may do so with little warning. Education must include what situations and/or environmental conditions are likely to present a greater danger. It is a dangerous exercise to develop that knowledge through trial and error in the field. This education can be accomplished through a detailed discussion of collisions that have been reconstructed to a reasonable detail such that the pitfalls can be demonstrated through such real-life examples. Simply

using cute jargon such as “In snow go slow” or something similar, in the hope that this will change driver behaviour, demonstrates the ignorance of many experts in the field.

Why Were Snow-Plowing Vehicles Present At Fatal Rear-End Accident Site?



View looking south at the site of a fatal rear-end collision in the northbound lanes of Highbury Avenue, just north of Bradley Avenue which occurred on Wednesday, January 27, 2016.

The official news media appear to exhibit a lack of curiosity in their failure to notify their audience that further questions should be asked regarding the fatal collision that occurred on Highbury Avenue in south London on January 27, 2016. As typical news media report that police are “still investigating” and the script is always the same: the results of that investigation are not revealed to the public. However a historical function of news reporters and journalists is to provide questions and answers to the public about unreported matters may be of relevance to that public.

With respect to the fatal, rear-end collision, it was reported that three vehicles were involved. A mini-van was travelling in front, a large, Voyager patient-transfer van was following behind and a third vehicle, a black pick-up truck, was the last of the three. It was obvious that nothing what-so-ever was mentioned in any of the official news items

as to how the collision unfolded. Yet there was obvious, major, frontal crush to the black pick-up truck and substantial rear-end damage to the Voyageur van. One would think that news media might at least have asked police whether the pick-up truck rear-ended the van. However there was an additional lack of curiosity in failing to ask: why was there so much damage from this impact?

Highbury Avenue at the collision site has a posted speed of 100 km/h and select vehicles frequently travel this road section well above that speed limit. It is also not difficult to observe that the collision events occurred near the entrance ramp where vehicles from Bradley Avenue enter the northbound lanes of Highbury. Vehicles entering on this entrance ramp have sufficient distance in which they can increase their speed to match the speed of vehicles on Highbury.

We ask again: Why is it that there was this large amount of damage from the impact between the Voyageur van and the black pick-up truck? Such damage would have to indicate that the black pick-up truck was travelling much faster than the Voyageur van. Yet, the less-severe impact of the mini-van in front would suggest that this was a secondary impact, as would be the typical scenario in such cases. So this would indicate that there was residual speed left over to strike the third vehicle. Although it might suggest that the black pick-up truck was travelling extremely quickly we wonder if that is the full story.

No one has had the curiosity to ask police why there were several snow-clearing vehicles parked at the accident site as shown at the top of this news item. There appears to be an incredible lack of curiosity and explanation of these matters, let alone how and why a patient in the Voyageur van, 79-year-old Yolanda Goethals, came to sustain her fatal injuries.

January 29, 2016

London City Police Officially Become “Traffic Investigators For The Rich”



Why should police stand in the middle of a wintry intersection and document the conditions that lead to the injury of “little people” who have little social stature or income?

An article in the London Free Press published on January 29, 2016, has claimed that the London City Police Service will no longer investigate “minor” collisions such as those where persons may be injured but are not transported to hospital. The tone of the quote from the force’s spokesperson, Constable Sandasha Bough, indicated the degree to which such investigation is believed to be a waste of time:

“it’s so we can (be available to) take other calls rather than sitting at the side of the road typing up this report. Now, with any motor vehicle collision you are there at least an hour.” (London Free Press, Jan 29-16)

We at Gorski Consulting have been in the business of investigating and reconstructing motor vehicle collisions for over 35 years. We have had the unique opportunity to have been involved in a federally-funded research program at Western University (1980-90) where we studied the injuries that occurred to vehicle occupants and what could be done to prevent or lessen those consequences. During that 10-year period we attended at the London City Police traffic office and conducted an examination of every reportable accident in the City (whether property damage, personal injury, or fatal). We examined a sample of these collisions in detail to understand what kind of injuries were occurring and what could be determined about their causes. We had a unique opportunity to examine how police were documenting the facts pertaining to those collisions. In later years we have also been involved in cases under civil litigation where injuries were claimed to have occurred and disputes arose over whether those injuries were faked or exaggerated. We are uniquely aware of the games that are played in the field both by plaintiffs and defendants so as to gain financial advantage.

In all this time we have observed the importance of documentation of objective evidence by impartial investigators. Even in the 1980s, even though every property damage collision was “reportable” and therefore a police report was completed, sloppy reporting was creeping into the system where police would begin to take short cuts such as pacing out measurements instead of using a proper tape measure. The reporting of vehicle positions at the point of impact and final rest were mandatory but were beginning to become sloppy in their detail. Reports were reviewed and signed off by police supervisors though the drudgery of continual reporting in the policeman’s life was well known but accepted as an essential activity.

Why was this done? Not just for a few years but for decades. It was because the rights of individuals mattered. Because even small and insignificant citizens in our society deserved to have their harm properly documented and adjudicated. Was it because there was an infinite supply of money and resources available back then? Why, in this computerized day and age, are we suddenly incapable of supplying the resources that we were capable of supplying when everything had to be done by pen, paper and typewriter?

Why in this age where a 3 mega-byte still camera could be purchased for \$10, can police not have such a camera at hand and snap 3 or 4 photographs of every collision that occurs? Storage issues: the tremendous problem of filing those photographs is claimed

to be the insurmountable problem. At Gorski Consulting we are aware of the situation and do not believe this propaganda. Our small business generates well over 200 gigabytes of still photographs a year that are stored on external hard drives. This does not include the vastly greater amounts of storage that we require for our multiple-video camera testing for active cases and our research. We can purchase a 4-terabyte hard drive for well under \$200 and we never have storage problems. There are a thousand megabytes in every gigabyte and a thousand gigabytes in every terabyte. How much space could police possibly need for such 3 megabyte photographs? Yet 3 or 4 photographs of vehicles at their final rest positions at an accident site could vastly improve the chances that a minor collision could be reconstructed with accuracy and precision. And this would vastly improve the chances that many “little people” would receive a just adjudication of their case.

We know very well what those so-called “minor injury” collisions truly are. Many of those will be soft-tissue injuries that are difficult to detect by emergency personnel and often do not reveal themselves until a day or two after the collision. And even then persons experiencing a sudden increase in pain will take a while to notify insurance representatives whose responsibility it is to compensate those individuals for their losses. Without objective evidence such as details of the collision those injuries will be even more difficult to adjudicate and more costly for victims to prove. However, those with the financial resources will be able to achieve their justice through payment of the fees that ordinary persons cannot afford.

Enter that magical “Wizard of Oz” called the Accident Reporting Centre which, with an apparent swing of its magical wand, will provide a full explanation of how a minor collision occurred simply by asking victims to provide a statement in their own words and via an attachment of a few general exterior photographs of the damaged vehicles, minus any objective evidence that might have existed at the collision site but has since been destroyed.

Meanwhile those of us who are professional accident reconstructionists fully understand that the most difficult collision to reconstruct is the one that produces the least, physical and objective evidence. Professional reconstructionists need to conduct a variety of testing, photogrammetric analysis of photographs, etc. just to dig out the evidence that could easily have been obtained by an impartial investigator at the accident site. That saving of an “hour” of time by the police investigator, means the adding of numerous

hours of analysis by reconstructionists and lawyers at their very modest billing rates, so that these experts can come to a reasoned decision about what compensation is fair to the accident victim.

The next ingenious process is to then remove all those expensive consultants and lawyers and have a case decided based on Provincial At-Fault Rules that determine a person's fault based on the geometry of how the vehicles came together at impact. Those relative positions can be determined by a person with no technical experience in accident reconstruction, who has no appreciation for how vehicles are capable of moving in space and has no appreciation for how drivers are able to move them. In fact it was always this easy: there was never the need to understand any physics or forces or any that complicated stuff. It was always possible for the insurance adjudicator to pull out the set of "rules", read from them, and it would all be crystal clear.

We at Gorski Consulting are consulted on occasions by accident victims who are recipients of these Words of God from their insurance adjusters. We are familiar with the common complaints that the rules did not make sense in their particular case, and in many of those instances the accident victims were right. The problem was that these victims did not have the money to fight this adjudication. Hire a lawyer, buy expensive accident reports, attend various meetings. Therefore these injustices to accident victims persist and will be magnified when they sustain significant injuries in collisions that are not investigated.

At Gorski Consulting we have no horse in this race. We are retained by lawyers and insurers and we provide an objective analysis and opinion regardless of who our client may be. We are paid, not at the top billing rate, but at a fair one that keeps us in business. We have no gain in championing the cause of the "little people", from whom we receive no money, but whose rights have been trampled and will be more so by the latest reduction in police investigation. But we also have a social conscience and understand that, if our society is to function properly, and if we are all to prosper, there must be fairness in its functioning. Failing to provide justice to those who deserve justice is our society's folly and can only lead to our collective misfortune.

January 28, 2016

Constable Tash Baiati's Actions Should be Applauded, Not Sanctioned, In Firing His Pistol As A Tool To Disable A Vehicle

It leaves us with considerable concern that the actions of Constable Tash Baiati's in firing of his pistol to disable a vehicle may be lumped together with the actions of other officers' actions that were over-reactions or criminal.

It has only been days that a jury found Constable James Forcillo guilty of attempted murder. And even this morning, January 28, 2016, Toronto's Police Chief Saunders announced criminal charges against four police officers. In this milieu, it was announced that Toronto Police Constable Tash Baiati was charged under the Police Services Act after he fired 14 rounds "at a motionless vehicle" (Toronto Star Newspaper).

The Toronto Star newspaper showed photos of the motionless vehicle that had been involved in a police chase and looked like it had been "boxed in" by several police cruisers as shown in their graphic below. It was apparently at this point, as the officers surrounded the vehicle that the Constable Baiati fired the rounds into the engine compartment of that vehicle.

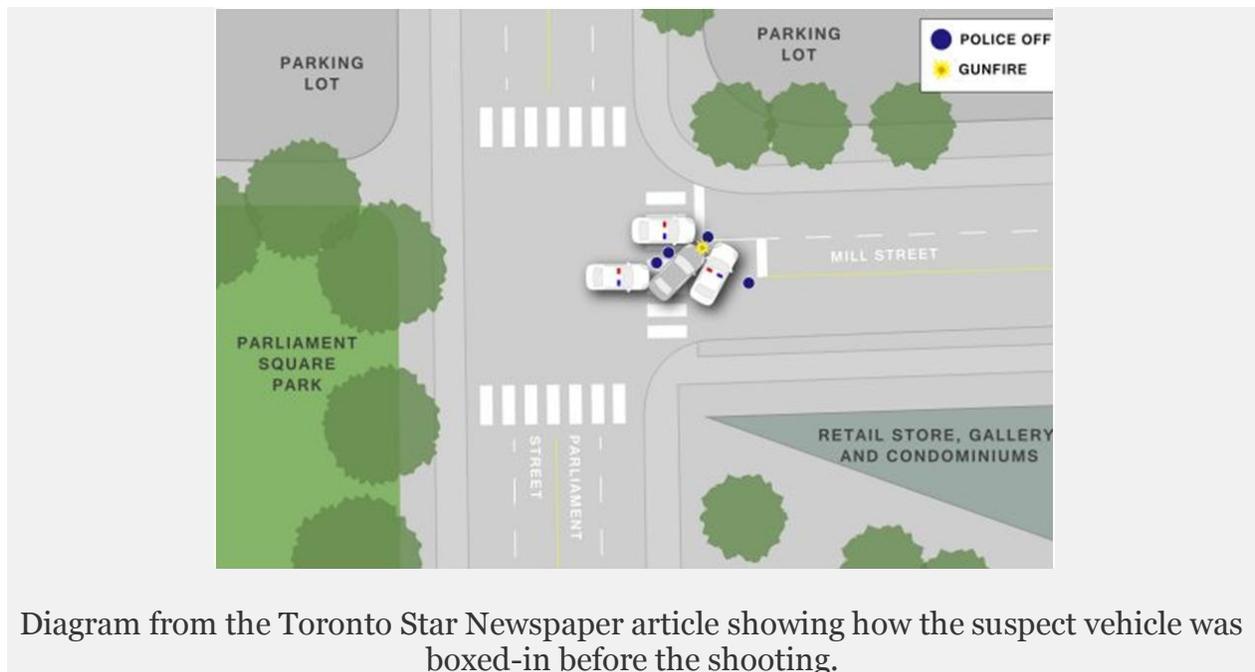


Diagram from the Toronto Star Newspaper article showing how the suspect vehicle was boxed-in before the shooting.

We have the utmost respect for Toronto Star Columnist Rosie DiManno as she has been on the right side of the page on numerous occasions. However, on this occasion we completely disagree with the opening sentence of her September 17, 2015 article which began:

“What THE HELL were they thinking? Actually, not a *they* but a HE: The cop...”

Regrettably Ms. DiManno missed the point that there is a vast difference between the over-reaction of Constable Forcillo and the intelligent action of Constable Baiati in disabling a vehicle that could have escaped to potentially kill other officers or innocent bystanders.

Ms. DiManno failed to recall the history of Ontario police officers who have been killed or injured after they had stopped a vehicle for potential arrest of its driver or occupants. Some of the history is noted below.

1. On the night of August 2, 2007 York Regional Police Detective Constable Robert Plunkett was killed after a vehicle operated by Nadeem Jiwa pinned him against a tree during Jiwa's attempt to flee from police.
2. On January 12, 2011, a reportedly mentally disturbed Mrchard Kachkar, stole a snowplow and struck Toronto Police Sergeant Ryan Russell, killing him. It was reported that Sergeant Russell exited his cruiser and fired several rounds at the snowplow before the fatal impact. Numerous other impacts with injuries occurred before Kachkar was finally stopped.
3. In the early morning hours of June 28, 2011, York Regional Police Constable Garrett Styles pulled over a Chrysler van on Highway 48 and requested that the 15-year-old driver exit the vehicle. When driver did not comply the officer opened the driver's door and attempted to reach in. The vehicle accelerated with Styles clinging while partially in/out of the vehicle. After 300 metres the van rolled over pinning him underneath. Constable Styles sustained fatal injuries.
4. On August 7, 2012, in London, Ontario, driver of a suspected stolen vehicle, Sharon Baker, was stopped by London City Police. As an officer “leaned through the front passenger-side window to arrest Baker she allegedly “gunned the car forward, dragging the officer who was half in an half out of the window. She then swerved the vehicle left and right causing the officer to be thrown to the

pavement...” The officer reportedly sustained a concussion, scrapes and contusions (London Free Press Newspaper).

5. On December 7, 2013 the Kitchener Record newspaper reported that two police officers were dragged for about 9 metres when a vehicle accelerated after the officers reached inside a vehicle to arrest a passenger. The events occurred at King and Water Streets in downtown Kitchener, Ontario, at approximately 0145 hours. The police did not go to hospital.

On many occasions police fail to appreciate that, as long as a driver is still in the driver’s seat of a vehicle, that driver is in a sense carrying a loaded weapon that can be used against police or innocent persons. When that driver fails to comply with demands to stop and exit the vehicle there is the potential that this 2000 pound weapon could be used for numerous potential impacts with other vehicles or pedestrians. It becomes crucial to disable that vehicle by whatever means possible. While it may appear to bystanders that jumping onto the hood of a stopped vehicle and shooting numerous rounds into the engine compartment is a sign of an uncontrolled over-reaction, it misses the point that disablement of such a vehicle is the right thing to do in many instances.

We obviously have no knowledge of the specifics of the incident and those specifics need to be examined. However, on face value, what we have read indicates that Constable Baiati’s actions deserve praise and should be an indication to other officers how to deescalate a situation without causing harm to anyone.

January 26, 2016

Not A Good Decision



Impatience leads to bad decisions that cost the lives of many road users...

The interaction of different road users and vehicles ultimately pits slow-moving vehicles against impatient drivers as shown in the above photo. In the photo below there is an obvious danger of a head-on collision with an opposing vehicle.



Lives lost are not only of those making bad decisions but also include innocent road users.

The tractor in the above photos appears to have its left (amber) signal light activated. Does that mean that the tractor will be turning left? In fact, the blinking of such amber lights on slow-moving vehicles may be confusing and fail to inform other drivers when a left turn is being contemplated.

Whether Forcillo or Yatim, Justice Not Seen To Be Done

The reconstruction of motor vehicle accidents and police involvement has some spill-over content to other incidents where police are involved with citizen deaths. Thus although the following discussion may appear to be irrelevant we believe it is not.

While the latest stage production of murder charges against Toronto police Constable James Forcillo continued on, average citizens were most likely left scratching their heads when it was announced that Constable Forcillo was found guilty of attempted murder when, by all logic, the person he shot was certainly dead.

Judicial experts and the news media proclaimed that it was cunning strategy to divide the two volleys of bullets into the first that evidently killed Sammy Yatim and the second which were found unnecessary and therefore a needless attempt to kill. While this judicial chess match made for great reading material what did it actually do to restore the public's trust in law and justice? In our opinion it set it back another step further.

The average citizen likely only heard and saw the two series of gun shots in a set of videos that would make anyone agree that Constable Forcillo's actions were an over reaction. For those supporting the police community the verdict was likely seen as an over reaction to a simple mental error that could occur to any one in a heated exchange. For those supporting justice for Yatim it was cold-blooded, unnecessary murder. Most citizens' opinions likely fell somewhere in between. But particularly those who have complained loudly over excessive and unnecessary force, police carding, etc., the result most likely pushed them to become more firmly entrenched in the camp that there will always be "one law for us all and another for the law", "a law for the rich and another for the poor", etc.

Supporters of Constable Forcillo pointed out that he was only responding in the manner in which he was trained. However, clearly, the video showed that his actions appeared to be unnecessary, so what training are police receiving? This leads to our connection of road motor vehicle collision analysis and police actions.

We have seen over the years a vast number of police performing a reputable but difficult job, yet there have been a number of incidents where police actions in the investigation of motor vehicle collisions were discreditable. On several occasions police escaped detection of their discreditable actions because their colleagues or others in the community supported those discreditable actions.

While lecturing at Ontario's Police College in Aylmer, Ontario in the 1980s we observed how eager young recruits were full of passion for their new careers and soaked in the proper training they received. Yet, within a few years of being exposed to the real world, the attitudes and actions of some of these fine men and women became different. It appeared that there was a disconnect between the theoretic training of the college and the additional, on-job, training that was not as neat and pretty. For those who hold steadfastly to their principles and continue to do their honourable job it can be frustrating and disillusioning to have to work in an environment where others'

discreditable actions place your identity in the same bowl of soup. Once the uniform is put on the individuality is lost and, in the view of the public, all police are the same.

We have observed that over-reaction is an indication that proper police training is not being administered through the full career of a police officer and that there is a lack of the ability to remove those individuals whose actions demonstrate that they are no longer re-trainable. Much like a virus, if discreditable officers and their behaviour are not isolated their effect can spread to the full community of police within their contact.

As demonstrated by Constable Forcillo's actions the need for a change in police training has long been ignored. The turning of a blind eye to the discreditable actions of a few is multiplied when police and their supporters continue an encirclement of their wagon train with disregard to whether the enemy lies within. At the same time, the inability of the public at large to listen to the complaints of the average officer on the beat, and become informed of their difficulties, must also change.

January 24, 2016

Winter Road Maintenance – Smoke & Mirrors Make Persons At Fault Disappear



Politicians, civil service administration & news media make names of those responsible for road maintenance failures disappear.

A January 21, 2016 article by CTV Toronto described data that they received from Ontario's Ministry of Transportation with respect to fines levied against winter

maintenance contractors from 2010 to 2015. Those fines amounted to \$47 million, yet only \$13.8 million, or about 30%, has ever been collected. This was with respect to 302 incidents where Ministry inspections found maintenance failures. There were numerous tables of results presented in the article.

However, nowhere in the article did it indicate, who conducted the inspections, who was fined, the name of the maintenance contractor firm, which contractors have not paid the fines, etc., such that the persons responsible have been vaporized by some mad magician.

A 2015 scathing report by Ontario's Auditor General revealed many of the problems associated with winter road maintenance but it also failed to produce names of the persons involved. Even the Auditor General was apparently unable to obtain data about levied fines, as noted in its report:

*“We attempted to obtain from the Ministry the amounts of fines assessed and fines waived since the introduction of performance-based AMCs in 2009. However, as discussed in **Section 5.3.6**, due to the incompleteness of the information the Ministry collects and compiles, the Ministry was unable to provide us with these amounts.”*

Even if the Ministry of Transportation attempts to replace a contractor no one asks the question how that replacement will take place. For example, how many road maintenance firms exist in a specific region of Ontario that could take over a new contract? Is it likely that a new contractor has dozens of snow clearing trucks just sitting around doing nothing and waiting for such a contract? Or is it likely that the original contractor just moves the equipment to a ‘friend’ who suddenly starts up a new road maintenance business? Our point is that there may be few truly “new” contractors, just old contractors putting on a tux and top hat while the public applauds the performance.



Let me take your snow away! I am your new road maintenance contractor!

January 15, 2016

Vigilante Law & Justice Have No Place In Our Society – An Editorial Comment

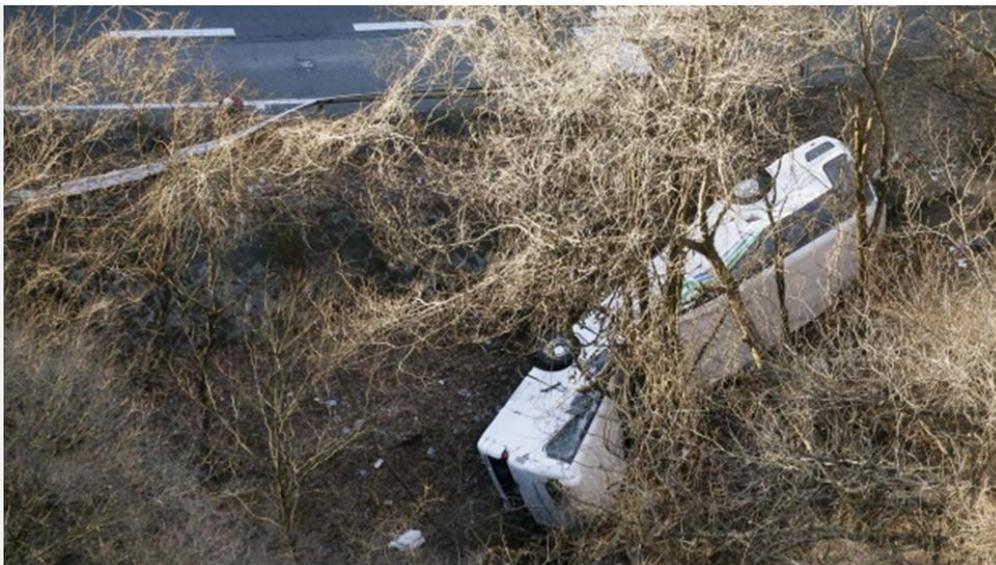
Gorski Consulting has observed a long-trending upswing in the numbers of comments and opinions among members of our society that use emotion and snake oil salesmanship to argue various points of law and justice in the sense that reason, logic and fact need not apply. A common trend is to believe that there are black and white answers to our problems and that quick and painful vigilante justice is what will rid us of our evils. While each day sees an increased ability in our advanced technology, each day also sees instances of regression into our shallow, basic instincts while we refuse to use our advanced technology to guide our reasoning.

Law and justice cannot mimic this trend in our society. As noted by so many others before, law and justice must be unbiased and equally fair to all. Law and justice must

focus on collection of objective fact and insure that evidence is properly analysed and interpreted. Law and Justice must not be administered based on whose voice is the loudest but often protecting the rights of those who are unable to speak. Law and justice must be consistent and slow to react to the ever-changing waves of societal turmoil. Above all, law and justice must not be manipulated to benefit those whose ambition is to gain revenge, or to those who hold the belief that the only version of right and wrong is what comes from the repetitive voice that can only utter the same, small number of unchanging phrases in their head.

At Gorski Consulting we are not immune to the processes that govern us all. However we strive to provide factual information where possible and comment on matters that we hope are of importance to our community of readers. Our objective is to share our knowledge and interpretation of evidence that we have gathered over the years and to encourage others to recognize and document that objective evidence. We also encourage readers to be vigilant and recognize that we are all capable of being manipulated by the repetitive, societal commercial that indeed a product is “new and improved” and will always get the stains out.

Multiple-Fatal Japanese Bus Crash No Different Than What Could Happen In North America



The tour bus shown in this site photo crashed through a guardrail in Japan before rolling over to expose its soft roof area to a subsequent impact with several trees. This is a warning of what also occurs in North American bus collisions.

While bus crashes in far away places like Japan would seem irrelevant to the situation in North America, that conclusion cannot be any more wrong. The scenario in the above photo plays itself out in many collisions across North America and we choose to ignore this fact. This bus crash reportedly occurred today (January 15, 2016 due to the difference in time zones).

As shown in the upper left of the above photo, the bus struck a guardrail which is shown deflected toward the embankment. The typical low height of such a barrier provides minimal benefit in most low-speed bus impacts. However in high speed impacts an impacting bus is frequently “tripped” by the barrier such that the bus rolls onto its side rather than remaining upright. In this case, the tripping of the bus exposed its soft roof area as the bus fell over a relatively small embankment, reported to be only about 3 metres (10 feet) in total drop. The exposed roof area struck the trees that can be seen pressed against the bus at its final rest position. The extent of buckling of the roof is misleading, suggesting that the bus was involved in a much higher collision severity (change-in-velocity) than it actually was. The roofs of large buses are notoriously soft and provide very little protection to the large number of passengers that can be exposed to this danger. Although there have been too many similar, multiple-fatal bus collisions in North America there has been very little publicity about this little-recognized danger. This is an indication of how various official government agencies and the news media have failed to inform and warn the general public of a danger that the general public know very little about.

Why is the Road Maintenance Contractor Carillion Using Under-Sized Snow Plows?



View of a Carillion snow plow in the right lane next to a typical truck trailer westbound on Highway 401 near Wellington Road in London. The snow plow is undersized as noted by the comparison to the truck trailer. Why is this small sized snow plow being used?

The road maintenance contractor, Carillion, was awarded a road maintenance contract by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation however it has been implicated in several complaints about its past actions with respect to proper winter maintenance of Ontario's highways.

On January 14, 2016 Gorski Consulting observed the Carillion snow plow shown in the above photo travelling westbound on Highway 401 and approaching the exit at Wellington Road. The plow looked peculiarly small in comparison to the typical size seen on other occasions operated by other agencies such as the City of London.



A closer look at the apparently under-sized Carillion snow plow. The truck appeared to be unusually small compared to typical snow-plowing trucks.

Unfortunately we were unable to explore this issue any further however we question why Carillion would be using such small units for their snow plowing activities.

January 13, 2016

Road Conditions Winter-Like But Variable in Region of London Ontario



View looking southbound on Wonderland Road north of Springbank Drive in London, Ontario in the late afternoon of January 12, 2016. Snowfall was variable resulting in variable road conditions.

While road conditions on January 12, 2016 were reportedly severe in areas to the north such as Huron and Bruce Counties, many areas to the south in the vicinity of London Ontario were bearable, at times. The photo above shows a portion of Wonderland Road in west London during a sudden increase in snowfall. Sporadic snowfall increases associated with squalls coming off of Lake Huron made driving conditions unpredictable.

Some examples of situations on London roads are shown below.



Residents using snow blowers were sometimes situated too close to traffic. Here a resident on Oxford Street west of Highbury has his back turned to traffic while snow cover might cause vehicles to slide out of control. Sometimes even the colour of clothing (black is helpful in this case) can help drivers detect a pedestrian who may be too close to the road edge.



Another resident cleaning snow on Hale Street near Wavell Street in east London, has his back turned to traffic while standing at the edge of the lane. Wearing a black jacket in this scenario is helpful as it contrasts against the white snow and the person is more visible.



Wheel tracks were generally passable in most circumstances. The lurking danger is when those wheels stray out of the wheel tracks and onto deeper snow that exists quite close to those cleared wheel tracks.



Biking lanes painted onto City streets are combined with new laws requiring drivers to remain at least one metre lateral distance away from bicycles when passing. This becomes a problem in winter as snow is plowed onto the roadsides thus narrowing the road width. One might think cyclists would not exist in these conditions but not so.



With more difficult economical times more residents are seen riding bicycles on snow-covered roads, not for pleasure but for necessity. This becomes a safety concern. This cyclist is seen riding eastbound on Hamilton Road west of Adelaide Street in London, Ontario.

Persons do strange and unexpected things in poor road conditions. Stopping in the middle of a four-lane road in snowfall for no apparent reason can be dangerous as indicated in the following three photos.



Londoners obsessed with their Tim Hortons coffee are everywhere as shown in this example of a delivery being made on Clarke Road south of Huron Street. A southbound white pick-up truck would appear to be stopping to allow the pedestrian to run across the road...but not so.



Rather than crossing the road the coffee-laden pedestrian runs to the stopped truck.



A coffee delivery is witnessed as the pedestrian climbs into the truck in the middle of traffic. All that was needed was an inattentive driver approaching from the rear and this could have been a significant rear-end impact.

Outside of the City of London weather conditions naturally worsened, particularly the further one travelled northward and toward Lake Huron. Over the years Gorski Consulting has spent considerable time examining the conditions along the Seven S-Curves of Adelaide Street. This 20-kilometre stretch of Adelaide runs from Medway Road to the south up to Highway 7 to the north. As the name (“Seven S-Curves of Adelaide”) implies, there are seven S-curves along this route each with their unique characteristics and we have been documenting these facts with video, still photos and instrumentation that provides data on the test-vehicle’s accelerations and motions while passing through the curves. Thus we travelled northbound along this route on January 12, 2016 to determine how the road conditions compared to the other areas in and around London.

The photo below shows a forward view through the windshield of our vehicle as we approach Curve #1, which is the most southerly of the seven curves. Although snow

exists in both lanes, the wheels tracks of the lane are essentially bare, thus making one believe that the curve can be travelled at reasonably high speed.



While approaching northbound on Adelaide Street toward Curve #1 the surface of the lane would appear to be centre-bare and therefore easily traversed at relatively high speed. However every driver needs to understand that winter road conditions can change rapidly.

In the above photo we can see a southbound vehicle approaching in the curve but we are unable to see the road surface in that distance. All we see is that the lane ahead shows bare wheels tracks so there is no reason for concern. As we proceed into the first half of the S-Curve and the southbound vehicle approaches we still see no reason for concern, as shown in the photo below. Yet our ability to see ahead is diminished likely by the blowing snow but also by the geometry of the curve.



As a southbound vehicle approaches in the first portion of Curve #1 there is still no indication that there are poor road conditions and the wheels tracks of the northbound lane are bare.

Suddenly, as we enter into the middle of the S-Curve the lane becomes completely covered in snow making it difficult to detect the orientation of the curve, as shown in the photo below.



Suddenly and dramatically, as we are in the middle of Curve #1 the wheel tracks disappear as the complete lane is covered in snow, some of the snow depth being rather substantial.

Fortunately the hazard markers located on the right side of the road provide guidance as to the correct orientation of the curve and this indicates how such markers can be extremely important in specific situations like this.

As we move into the second part of the S-Curve the snow cover begins to diminish as evidenced by the existence of bare pavement in the background of the southbound lane shown in the photo below.



As we proceed into the second half of the S-Curve the snow continues to exist throughout the road width, however, in the background we can see the snow cover begin to diminish as we come out of the end of the curve, particularly in the southbound lane.

This is an important example of real-life circumstances. When the road was straight and level we encountered relatively safe road conditions. Then, at the crucial point when we entered the curve, at a point when our navigation around the curve required extra visual cues, those cues disappeared as the curve was suddenly engulfed with snow.

The other important fact is that we did not encounter the southbound vehicle in the curve. We passed the vehicle before we entered the area where the curve was suddenly engulfed in snow. If we had encountered that vehicle in the curve the scenario might have been more demanding. Travelling at higher speed we might brake and that might cause us to change our steering inputs. Now we might be involved in braking and steering while trying to decipher the path of the curve at a location where the width of travel would be narrowed by the presence of that southbound vehicle. This would be an undesirable set of circumstances.

Interestingly, we encountered the same conditions when approaching Curve #2 and 3#. The straight portion of highway on approach to these curves contained bare wheels tracks and then the road surface became suddenly engulfed with snow inside of each curve. We will not show photos of these occurrences as this would make this discussion too lengthy. However, drivers need to understand how undesirable events can develop rapidly and without apparent logic. Experience is often the best educator.

Another scenario that occurs frequently on snow-covered roadways during poor visibility is that we eventually encounter drivers with different attitudes toward driving safely. Some drivers can drive dangerously by travelling too quickly. Others can drive dangerously by driving too slowly. As an example, the photo below shows a lead vehicle travelling northbound on Highway 4 toward Highway #7. The visibility is rather poor and the road surface conditions are not favourable. The driver of the leading vehicle has performed the prudent act of driving slowly as instructed. However many drivers have not travelled so slowly and this has produced a long line of vehicles behind the lead vehicle.



In this photo we see a line of vehicles travelling northbound on Highway 4 south of Highway 7. It is obvious that the driver of the first vehicle has been extra cautious and travelling at a slow speed. This has resulted in a long line of vehicles piling up behind the lead vehicle.

The length of the line up behind the lead vehicle was quite substantial as evidenced by the photo below.



The length of the line up of vehicles behind the lead vehicles was quite substantial as witnessed by this photo.

In general, a scenario as shown above is safer as it has reduced the speed of a large number of vehicles. Impatient drivers see no benefit from attempting a passing motion as the motion will be fruitless as the driver would have to pass many vehicles before being clear of the leading vehicle. However, there are instances where the driver of the 2nd, 3rd or 4th vehicle may be “the impatient driver” and that driver may come to the belief that the misery could be ended if he/she could pass the one, two or three vehicles ahead. Now we have a genuine problem. Road conditions like these are clearly not where one should attempt to pass even a single vehicle let alone two or three. However, that has not stopped some drivers from attempting this suicidal act. Unfortunately, in misjudging the passing action the impatient driver causes the loss of control of southbound vehicles and these southbound vehicles end up crossing into the congested northbound lane where vehicles are already likely bunched together too closely to attempt a successful emergency stop. The result is that multiple vehicles are involved in a collision with the potential for multiple fatalities.

It is true that the driver of the slow-moving lead vehicle might be performing a safe act by driving slowly. Yet that driver cannot have blinders about him/her and fail to recognize when a very slow speed becomes more dangerous when it creates frustrations amongst drivers behind. A logical action in circumstances where a driver needs to travel exceptionally slowly is to pull over onto a driveway or other roadside area to relieve the congestion that develops behind them and then proceed once again when the line of traffic has passed ahead. Actions like these are not only a simple gesture of courtesy, they may also make for a safer environment for everyone on the road.

January 11, 2016

Two-Serious Collisions

At least two serious collisions have occurred in the last 24 hours in the London and its environs.

A four-vehicle collision occurred on Veterans Memorial Parkway near the intersection with Bradley Avenue. The frame grab below is taken from a U-tube video that showed the operations of emergency personnel as they attempted to extricate a male driver from a pick-up truck that was struck by a northbound tractor-trailer. The male was taken to hospital with life-threatening injuries.

Accident at Bradley and Veterans



A frame grab taken from a U-tube video shows rescue personnel working on extricating a man from a pick-up truck that was struck by a northbound tractor-trailer.

A second collision reportedly occurred on Perth County Line 20 between Exeter and Fullarton, Ontario. An eastbound van reportedly driven by Barry Allen Edwards, of South Huron, crossed the roadway centre-line into the path of a westbound truck and trailer. Edwards was killed. In many such incidents a vehicle such as this van enters into a state of loss-of-control and this is the mechanism that causes it to cross the roadway centre-line. While the roadway was reported to have been freshly plowed and treated there is often insufficient investigation or evidence to truly understand what mechanism would have resulted in a loss-of-control, if indeed such an event occurred. This is a discussion that is needed with the public but never occurs.

January 10, 2016

Winter Road Conditions Finally Return – Along With Their Dangers



Changing lanes on partially snow-covered roads can be tricky for those who have experienced minimal snowfall this season.

Canadians are supposed to be a hardy bunch who know everything there is to know about winter driving, or those are the misleading perceptions of some. The reality is that winter road conditions have always been difficult to judge, even by the loudest pundits. When snow covers a road surface it requires an experienced eye to perceive and understand when danger lurks.

We provide the following visual clues for what looks like danger and what is not.

Even when snow is falling drivers have a sense that a road surface is just wet and not icy, as shown in the example photo below.



Even when snow is falling a road surface that is shiny like in this photo provides a high probability that it is only wet, not icy. Though, on very rare occasions, that may not be so.

Drivers have become experts in detecting road surface conditions from inside of their vehicles but studying the surface closely, but only when it is safe to do so. Drivers have to know what a road surface looks like when a salt/sand spreading truck has recently passed and dropped material on the road surface, such as shown in the following photos.



Drivers have to be able to detect when a salt spreader has recently passed over a road and deposited a layer of fresh salt such as shown in this photo.



The salt pellets will look like there has been a hail storm as there will appear to be small granules of "hail" deposited on the ground as shown in this photo.



The deposits of “hail-like” salt granules will sometimes be melted in the tire tracks of vehicles due to the heat generated from friction between vehicle tires and the surface, as shown in this photo.

When drivers misinterpret the road surface conditions their expectations are violated and a collision often occurs. There is typically an increase in collisions occurring during snowfall or after snow has accumulated on the road surface. As an example, Gorski Consulting took a short trip through the streets of London, Ontario and it did not take us long to observe a collision at the intersection of Oxford Street and Clarke Road, at approximately 1600 hours, as shown in the photos below.



View of a Toyota Pick-up truck that struck down the traffic signal on the south-west quadrant of the intersection of Oxford Street and Clarke Road at approximately 1600 hours of January 16, 2016.



View of relatively minor damage caused to the Toyota whereas there will be substantial costs associated with replacing the traffic signal and its pole. Breakaway poles like this can reduce the severity of impact to the vehicle while potentially increasing the damage to nearby pedestrians.

What we fail to acknowledge, and what leads to numerous incidents of injury and death, is that detection of ice on a road surface is difficult. As an example we present several photos below of a portion of the southbound lanes of Wonderland Road, in London Ontario near the intersection with Bradley Avenue. The photo below shows two southbound vehicles approaching a red traffic signal where ice has formed on the road surface.



An accident scenario that is rarely acknowledged: ice formation on a road surface is difficult to detect, as shown in this photo of southbound traffic on Wonderland Road in London, Ontario.

While we show this static image, allowing readers to spend an infinite amount of time to decipher its details, a driver travelling at 70 km/h will have little time to look closely at an area of surface that has developed ice. While many pundits claim that drivers should drive for “the” road conditions they fail to understand that there is no such thing as “the” road condition and that road conditions are in constant change from time to time and from location to location. A road that may contain partial snow cover with bare wheel paths may suddenly exhibit an area of ice cover. That is the reality.

Continuing with the scenario on Wonderland Road, we see below that the vehicle on the left has its wheels braking on bare pavement whereas the vehicle on the right is travelling on a sheet of ice.



In the passing lane the vehicle on the left experiences bare pavement in the wheel tracks. In contrast, the vehicle to the right, travelling in the curb lane, experiences a sheet of ice.

Yet, it is not easy for a driver who must also look toward other potential dangers, to detect that the road surface has suddenly turned to ice.

How easy is it to look at the photo below, while braking from a speed of 70 km/h, to detect that the road surface has suddenly developed a sheet of ice?



While looking at this photo closely, it is possible to detect the ice, that is not a reasonable expectation for a large percentage of drivers who may not be expecting this development and may not have the luxury of looking down at the road surface at a time when that observation is critical.

It is our observation that ice formation on a road surface is a dirty word, not to be mentioned in official circles. That comes from the reality that it is difficult to control ice formation as road maintenance departments do not have sufficient resources to react appropriately in a large number of incidents. This may originate from problems such as not having sufficient weather data to predict when and where ice will form. It may originate from the fact that snow plowing, salting and sanding are just not effective enough to prevent ice formation at certain times and locations or that these resources simply have not arrived at the critical time and location when their presence was required. When these difficulties are difficult to control we would rather not discuss them than face them.

January 8, 2016

Audi Pole Impact – Was an Icy Oxford Street A Causal Factor In The Crash?



An Audi Sedan is shown at its rest position after striking a utility pole on Oxford Street just east of Highbury Avenue in London, Ontario on the evening of January 7, 2016.

It was reported that at approximately 1847 hours on Thursday, January 7, 2016 an Audi sedan was eastbound on Oxford Street in London, Ontario when it left the roadway and struck a utility pole on the south side of the road. The direct impact was to the driver's door and the vehicle spun around to come to rest on the east side of the pole.

Nothing was identified with respect to the identity of the driver other than the single male occupant was transferred to hospital in critical condition. Oxford Street was closed by police from Highbury Ave to First Street for a number of hours. Nothing was mentioned regarding the cause of the crash.

Gorski Consulting examined the site in the late-morning hours of January 8, 2016 or approximately 16 hours after the crash. When we originally passed through the site, travelling eastbound at approximately 1000 hours, there was a London Hydro crew at the struck utility pole, likely conducting repairs or assessments, as shown in the photos below.



View, looking eastward, at approximately 1000 hours, showing a London Hydro crew at the struck utility pole on Oxford Street in London, Ontario



Closer view of London Hydro vehicles located at the struck utility pole at approximately 1000 hours on January 8, 2016.

Not wanting to interfere with their duties we returned to the site at approximately 1125 hours and the London Hydro vehicles were no longer present. The photo below shows the general evidence around the struck pole.



View, looking west, from just east of the struck utility pole. The Audi was travelling in the direction toward the camera and struck the pole in the foreground.

The photo below shows a westward view of the struck pole. Fresh sand around the base of the pole was consistent with the work that the London Hydro crew would have performed to stabilize the pole.



View looking east at the struck utility pole.

Markings on the pole confirmed that contact was made with the driver's door. Such markings include horizontal imprints that are created by the window frame and roof. Imbedded glass would have come from the driver's window.



Markings on the pole such as imbedded glass and horizontal imprints confirmed that the contact was with the driver's door.

Thus the impact evidence on the pole did not demonstrate anything unusual.

As typical, we then searched the area to identify how the vehicle approached the pole impact. The photo below shows where we located one of the tire contacts to the curb as the vehicle left the curb lane and struck the pole visible in the background.



A typical procedure is to identify any tire/wheel markings where the loss-of-control vehicle struck a curb on its way to the impact. Here the investigator's finger is pointing to the location of one of those tire markings on the south curb.

A closer view of the tire mark at the south curb is shown below. The diagonal striations in the mark are indications of a yaw mark that is created when the vehicle is rotating about its vertical axis.



A closer view of the striated markings on the top surface of the curb where the rotating tire of the vehicle produced evidence of a yaw mark.

We then looked into the eastbound lanes of Oxford Street to identify the yaw marks that should have been present as a result of the vehicle's rotation into a lateral position when

it struck the pole. The significant point here is that no such yaw marks were visible. This is an important discovery.

When vehicles rotate out of control they invariably produce yaw marks. Yaw tire marks are typically curved with different extents of curvature as the tires of the vehicle follow different paths as the vehicle rotates. Within these yaw marks one typically finds the diagonal striations that we showed in the earlier photo at the curb impact. When a driver brakes or accelerates the angle of the striations within the yaw mark will change and this can be a valuable investigative tool. Also the geometry of those yaw marks can be used to estimate vehicle speed. So identification of yaw marks is important in a collision investigation. But, as we stated, no such marks were visible even though we attended at the site within 16 hours of its occurrence.

If one thinks about it, the creation of visible markings of a tire must mean that a portion of the tire is sliding with respect to the surface on which it is travelling. For example, when hard braking is applied a visible “skid” mark is produced, even with ABS. Similarly when a driver presses hard on an accelerator pedal we see acceleration tire marks on the road because the fast spinning tire is depositing rubber on the surface because there is a substantial tire force at the interface between the tire and surface. And when a yaw mark is created there is also some sliding taking place between a rotating tire and road surface which indicates there is a substantial tire force in existence.

Thus whenever we see a visible tire mark it is an indication that there was a substantial force at the interface between the tire and the surface. However, in our case on Oxford Street, there was no such visible evidence. Yet, surely, we know that the Audi rotated into a lateral position leading with its driver’s side because all the evidence points to that. So why do we not see any visible yaw marks in the eastbound lanes of Oxford Street leading to the pole impact?

In rare occasions the explanation can be unique and complicated. We might even say that if an investigator does not know what a yaw mark looks like or where to look for it then, with respect to that investigator, the tire mark is not visible. That is playing with semantics but never-the-less it should lead one to further questions about what we mean about what is visible and why something is visible.

Returning to the practical issues, why do we not see yaw marks when the Audi obviously went into yaw? Well, likely because there was insufficient force at the interface between the tire and the surface. But how could that be? Under what circumstance could there be a low tire force? How about when the road surface is slippery, for example if the surface is covered by water or ice?

So might the eastbound lanes of Oxford Street have been wet or icy as the Audi travelled over them and the driver lost control of the vehicle? It can be difficult to say with certainty unless we were a police officer who first arrived shortly after the collision. However there is was evidence at the site that would lead one to suspect that ice was present.

Below are two views from a number of photos we took along the edges and centre of the Oxford Street to document the presence of salt crystals which are indicative that a salting truck had passed through and deposited salt “in the not to distance past”. How long ago is difficult to say as it depends on many factors. But it could be consistent with a time around the collision event.



View looking west along the south edge of the curb lane of Oxford Street west of the pole impact. Particles of unmelted salt are visible near this edge indicating that the salt was deposited “in the not to distant past”.



Close-up view of the unmelted salt crystals near the south edge of the curb lane of Oxford Street.

Our assessment in the vicinity of the site indicated that salt had been applied only locally and particularly along the travel path of the Audi as it would have approached the impact with the utility pole. Such evidence occurs when police who arrive at an accident site note that the road surface is covered with ice and they call the maintenance department of the City to come and apply salt where the ice exists. However, since the road is closed to the public, and even to local news media, the existence of the ice cannot be identified unless police or someone with intimate knowledge of the site conditions at the time of the collision allows that information to be revealed.

The potential of ice existing in the eastbound lanes of Oxford Street can also be evaluated by considering the reported environmental conditions at the time of the crash. The collision reportedly occurred at 1847 hours. Data from the London Airport weather station indicate that, at 1800 hours of January 7th the sky was mainly clear, the temperature was 0 degrees Celsius, the wind was at 7 km/h from the south-east and the windchill was -2 degrees Celsius. At 1900 hours the sky was still mainly clear, the

temperature was -1 degree Celsius, the wind was 4 km/h from the south-south-east and the windchill was -3 degrees. These values are indicative of conditions that could commence the freezing of water on the road surface. So, from the weather data, the possibility of ice formation in the eastbound lane of Oxford Street could also be a likely possibility.

From the evidence before us it is reasonable to believe that police were aware that ice was present in the eastbound lane(s) of Oxford Street at the time of this collision and that the ice was likely a contributor to the loss of control of the Audi sedan. Yet, why was this not reported to the public. We can understand when a similar collision occurs that police will announce if speeding, alcohol or driver distraction were likely causal factors in a crash. This is often stated when a police spokesperson is interviewed by news media, often on the day of the crash. Such comments are made to inform the general public of the dangers of these causal factors. So why, when a roadway is icy, do the police not follow the same procedures? Why do not police that, alcohol was involved, that speed was involved, that a driver was inattentive and that the roadway was icy and therefore was also a causal factor in a crash?

This type of biased selection of reporting causal factors is unprofessional and could be a danger to the public when the public is not made aware of the importance of the City's duty to act proactively and apply salt or de-icing solution. In the present case the public should have been informed so that an evaluation could take place to determine whether the City of London maintenance department acted properly in the hours before any ice was formed by monitoring weather conditions and data.

January 3, 2016

Climate Change? Bring Out The Winter Tires



The above photo was taken in west London, Ontario on December 24, 2015. The temperature was in the lower teens Celsius, joggers were jogging in shorts and golfers were wondering why they booked that Florida vacation.

In contrast we forget that almost a year ago the weather was quite different, as shown in the photo below.



This was the scene on January 7, 2015 on Highway 401 near Wellington Road in south London, Ontario.

Although delayed, the Canadian winter will undoubtedly come, often remarkably quickly.

Promotions for installation of winter tires have become prominent in Ontario in the past year. When roads are covered in snow and ice winter tires are a good idea. However, when the vast majority of days include bare or wet pavement the additional cost and other factors demonstrate the complexity of the issue.

The location and volume of traffic on a road can say a great deal about what can be expected in terms of its surface quality. The two photos below indicate the conditions on Glass Avenue in east London on January 3, 2014. Although the snow has been plowed there is a layer of compacted snow remaining that could be slippery in unpredictable locations.



The surface condition of Glass Ave in east London on January 3, 2014. Although plowed, the remains of snow are compressed leaving a layer of snow.



Close-up view of the quality of the surface of Glass Ave on January 3, 2014.

In contrast, just a couple of blocks to the west, on Hale Street, the road contained a higher traffic volume and was treated to remove all snow and ice from its surface as indicated in the photo below.



View of the condition of the surface of Hale Street in east London, just a couple of blocks west of Glass Ave., on January 3, 2014.

Regardless of the tires making contact with the road surface, when that surface is extremely slippery and ice-covered there will be difficulties in stopping and controlling a vehicle. Road conditions are not predictable. Rather, drivers should be alerted to the fact that winter road conditions can change rapidly and often with little warning. Issues such as snow squalls, snow drifts and variable snow-plowing actions can create large variances in road surface conditions. Good judgment, vigilance and patience are often better safety measures than a reliance on good tires.

January 2, 2016

Vehicle “Impaled” On Red Hill Valley Parkway in Hamilton, Ontario



Imagery from Google Maps shows an ET-Plus terminal that has jammed, likely as of an impact, on the northbound lanes of the Red Hill Valley Parkway at Queenston Road in Hamilton, Ontario.

The Hamilton Spectator newspaper has reported that a northbound vehicle on the Red Hill Valley Parkway was “...impaled on a piece of guardrail...” near the exit for Queenston Road. The incident reportedly occurred on the morning of January 1, 2016. The vehicle was “badly damaged” and an injured female driver had to be extricated by ripping off the roof of the vehicle.

Gorski Consulting examined the Google Maps imagery of the location and discovered an ET-Plus terminal that was damaged and “jammed”, as noted in the Google views shown below. This imagery preceded the collision of January 1, 2016 and it is not known whether the damage shown was repaired or if indeed this was the same location where the latest collision occurred.



Overall view, northbound on the Red Hill Valley Parkway, while approaching the Queenston Road exit. There is a damaged ET-Plus terminal between the northbound lanes and the Queenston Road exit.



The damage to the ET-Plus terminal is typical of what has been described by whistleblower, Joshua Harmon, in his civil suit against Trinity Highway Products, claiming that the terminal becomes jammed and causes a harpooning of the striking vehicle.



Note how a small amount of the guardrail has passed through the terminal before the terminal folded over the rail and became jammed. This is typical of the detective functioning claimed by Joshua Harmon.

Global News televised a documentary on their “16 X 9” program in October of 2015 which high-lighted the controversy surrounding the installation of ET-Plus terminals across North America. Thousands of these terminals have been installed in Ontario but officials have claimed that there is no definitive indication that the terminals are unsafe.

News media in Ontario have failed to present the problem to the general public so that they can be properly informed about the issue. Global News has been the only news organization that has brought the matter to the public’s attention. Even in the Hamilton Spectator newspaper article there was no mention whether the vehicle was impaled by an ET-Plus terminal yet, throughout the U.S., this has been a topic of much debate and publicity. As almost all municipalities and the Ontario Ministry of Transportation have installations of ET-Plus terminals throughout their roads and highways it would be a tremendous expense if the installations were found to be defective because there would be a public outcry to have them replaced.

The number of collisions that occur where an ET-Plus becomes jammed appears to be held secret as evidenced by the lack of publicity surrounding the jamming of the ET-Plus shown in the Google Maps imagery on the Red Hill Valley Parkway. Similarly, unless someone was acutely aware of the issue, the Hamilton Spectator news article would not lead anyone from the public to question whether the collision on the Red Hill Valley Parkway of January 1, 2016 involved a jammed ET-Plus terminal.

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