

10 AND 2 CHALLENGE

Convincing drivers to handle the steering wheel properly

I unveiled a new road safety initiative at the second annual One Crash is Too Many gala event last month.

Thank you to this year's "celebrities," leaders in the local "car crash industry" who helped make this year's event a success: AM 1150's Phil Johnson, personal injury lawyer Steven Turner, West Kelowna Fire Chief Wayne Schnitzler, RCMP member Sandy Fazan, and Kelowna General Hospital chief of staff Dr. Mike Ertel.

I am also very grateful to the substantial volunteer efforts of CHBC's Don Ferguson and his students at the Centre for Arts and Technology, who put together a fabulous western-themed video of the celebrities at the OK Corral, costumes generously donated by Kerri Brandel, of Calowna Costume.

Of course, Magda Kapp and her crew at BrainTrust Canada were the wizards behind the organization and perfect execution of the event itself.



ACHIEVING JUSTICE

Paul Hergott

The new road safety initiative I unveiled is the "ten and two challenge."

I wrote about experimenting with this road safety idea in my column of March 29, 2012. It was in that column where I shared my thoughts about the senseless rear-ender crash March 20, 2012, that resulted in the death of one motorcyclist and serious injuries to another in Kelowna.

My experiment, which has been ongoing for over a year now, has been a success.

I found that it takes effort to keep my hands at a particular location on the steering wheel.

Any time my mind wanders, whether it be thinking about the office, my kids, or whatever the distraction, my hands naturally move to one of

those more comfortable positions that most of us end up using after years and years of driving.

You know what I mean—right wrist hanging over the top of the steering wheel; hands in the lap operating the bottom of the wheel; one hand on the wheel and the other elbow on the elbow rest, whatever your particular "sweet spot" is.

I find that I immediately notice the movement of my hands from the position I committed to maintaining, which alerts me that I'm not focusing my attention on the road and snaps me to attention.

See, I'm not a naturally attentive driver. Over the years of seeing the results of crash after crash after crash, I have become more and more responsible in my driving, but of course my mind is prone to wander just like everyone else's.

Just like everyone else, I had my share of close calls when I would slam on my brakes just in time; realize almost too late that I am entering an

intersection on a red light; etc. I had my share of situations that could have ended up like the one on March 20, 2012, in Kelowna, or the recent horrendous tragedy in Surrey.

I have not had even one close call since starting my ten and two experiment over a year ago. Its success got me excited. If it is so successful for me, perhaps it will be successful for others.

Perhaps if I can convince everyone to do this very simple thing while driving, a real difference can be made.

Announcing a road safety initiative at a gala event of 120 people does about as much for road safety in this province as being buried to the neck in the desert and trying to dig yourself out with the chopsticks that Jackie Chan put in your mouth (I love that movie, Shanghai Noon).

I am so very grateful to Global news anchor Doris Bregolis who happened to be at the gala event, interviewed me on camera, and broadcast my ten and two challenge on

Global this past Sunday.

A Google search of One Crash is Too Many Challenge brings up the news video on the Internet. There have been many encouraging responses posted to my OneCrashisTooMany.com website, though most of them sought to correct me on my poor choice of hand position.

I am informed that "10 and 2" has become problematic because it can cause the hands to get in the way of airbag deployment and result in injuries.

My research led me to Page 17 of ICBC's publication "tuning up for driv-

ers; getting you ready for your road test," available online, which states: "If there's an airbag in the steering wheel, the 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock or even an 8 o'clock and 4 o'clock position may be better than the 10 o'clock and 2 o'clock."

Well, shoot. I wish I had seen that before Global kindly broadcast my challenge. Really, though, it doesn't matter what particular hand position you choose.

What matters is committing to a particular position, so that the natural move of your hands away from that position, when your mind is distracted,

will snap you back to the important task at hand.

Whatever particular hand position you choose, I challenge whoever might be reading this column to join me in "doing the ten and two."

I also invite you to offer your feedback on how the mechanism works for you.

This column is intended to provide general information about injury claims. It is not a substitute for retaining a lawyer to provide legal advice specifically pertaining to your case. Paul Hergott is a lawyer at Hergott Law in West Kelowna.

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