

Unreasonable speed limits

If you routinely exceed the speed limit, sooner or later you're going to get a ticket.

I've had a few of those over the years. Fortunately the tickets I received were the lowest on the scale and the fine was minimal.

I've had a couple where the police officer clocked me at a certain speed and dropped the ticket to the lower level and explained I wouldn't lose points on my driver's licence because of that.

That little break usually comes when the cop knows the stretch of road lends itself to a little more speed and you weren't driving like a maniac, and of course you acted politely and didn't shoot off your mouth when you were pulled over.

If you get pulled over after being clocked on radar, rolling down you window and admonishing the officer for stopping you probably won't get you a lot of sympathy.

Police officers are human. Starting a conversation by yelling at a total stranger won't increase your odds of having a good day.

Maximum speeds are posted on city streets and highways for a reason. Usually the maximum speed is decided based on several factors including the type of road, proximity to schools, buildings, and other roads, and of course hills, curves, and other factors where excessive speed might result in you losing control and wrapping your car around a tree or light pole.

However, over the past few years there has been a rather dramatic shift in limits to some roads in the region and across Ontario, and a lot of them make no sense at all.

If you read the news you will have noticed there have been a lot of people charged with the dreaded 'stunt driving' offence over the past few years.

Originally designed to combat the practice of two cars racing on a highway or city street and endangering others on the road, the law was changed to 'stunt driving' and is enforced for people caught doing 50 km or more over the posted limit.

This sounds reasonable at first ? until you start looking at posted speed limits on certain roads and the ages of those that have been charged.

This isn't just a bunch of wild kids with hopped up rice-rockets ripping along the streets with squealing tires and hitting the highways at breakneck speeds. The list of those charged is all across the board in terms of age and the vehicles they were driving.

Being charged with Stunt Driving is serious. Your car is immediately impounded, your licence suspended and you face a possible fine of up to \$10,000. Add to that the repercussions of having your insurance rates go through the roof and your driver's licence possibly taken away.

Doing 50 km over the limit does sound extreme, however when speed limits are reduced to the point that a prudent driver hits a zone at a respectable speed for the road and suddenly finds the posted limit is far below what should be considered adequate for the stretch of road ? that's a problem.

Why these limits are suddenly being reduced to unreasonably slow speeds is a mystery.

A stretch of back road that I use all the time has been posted at 80 km/h, for at least 17 years. Then one day, to my surprise, the speed was reduced to 60 km/h overnight. It's a straight stretch of road with no dangerous curves, no blind spots, forward vision of at least several hundred yards and no reason you can't safely drive it even at 100 km/h with no problem.

Sure enough, there was a OPP vehicle hidden behind some trees waiting to catch drivers unaware the change had been made.

Another town bypass not far from Orangeville goes around the Honda plant in Alliston. It's a two-lane road. Most people would assume the limit is 80 km/h ? and that is a reasonable guess. However the limit is actually an absurd 50 km/h for some reason no one can explain.

When you reduce a speed limit to an unreasonable level on a stretch of road where a person on a bicycle or some hotshot skateboarder could blow the limit with barely breaking sweat, you have set people up to fail by simply turning onto the road.

Being charged with stunt driving can seriously affect many things including your finances and job.

If the province really wants to protect the roads, it should be done legitimately ? not by lowering speed limits on already safe roads and penalizing some soccer mom who is running a few minutes late for a game.