

Board of Health

HL21.14		Referred		
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Motion to Reduce the Number of “Doorings” in Toronto

City Council Decision

City Council on October 2, 3 and 4, 2017, referred Item HL21.14 to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee for consideration.

Board Recommendations

The Board of Health recommends that:

1. City Council write to the Premier, the Ontario Minister of the Attorney General, and the Ontario Minister of Transportation requesting:
 - a. The Motor Vehicle Accident Report be changed to have dooring collisions added to the formal collision reporting process.
 - b. The Highway Traffic Act be changed to that drivers are at least partially responsible when passengers "door" a cyclist.
 - c. That driver education programs, the Driver’s Handbook, and the G1 Knowledge Test teach all new drivers in Ontario about the “Dutch Reach” to reduce dooring incidents in Ontario (instead of using your door side arm, with the “Dutch Reach” drivers and passengers reach over with their other arm to open car doors. This forces them to swivel their bodies and do a shoulder check and helps to reduce accidents, dooring cyclists, and personal injury to occupants when exiting motor vehicles).
2. City Council request the Executive Director, Municipal Licensing and Standards Division, to report to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee on:
 - a. The introduction of new training requirements for vehicle-for-hire operators to reduce dooring collisions.
 - b. The requirement that rear view mirrors be installed on all passenger doors on vehicle-for-hire vehicles.

Origin

(September 25, 2017) Member Motion from Chris Glover, Education Representative, Board of Health

Summary

Last spring, along with 208 other Toronto cyclists, I was “doored” while riding my bike. I was

bruised and my bike was bent, but I got off relatively lightly compared to many of the other cyclists who suffered serious injuries from “doorings.” With the help of Jared Kolb of Cycle Toronto and Patrick Brown of Bike Law Canada, I have investigated “doorings” and would like to present the motion above to the Board of Health.

I’ll start by describing what happened to me because it illustrates several of the issues that need to be addressed by both the province and the City to reduce the number of doorings and the injuries associated with them.

"On May 23rd, I was riding my bike along Bloor Street approaching Bay (unfortunately there is no separated bike lane at this point on Bloor). An Uber driver stopped 3 feet out from the curb to let out her passenger in a no stopping zone in a bike lane. The passenger on the passenger side in the back seat opened the door right on me. The door was just opening as I was riding by. The edge of the door hit my left arm and left thigh – I had bruises on both and a scrape on my arm. My right knee also hit something and I had a bruise and swelling there. I was thrown off my bike, the front wheel was bent to the point where the bike was unrideable. The passenger was polite, gave me his phone number and name, but then left. The Uber driver refused to give me her information. I told her that she was legally obligated to give me her information after an accident or that we had to go to a collision reporting centre. She asked, “why would I have to go there, this has nothing to do with me.”

"The police came and took a report from the Uber driver first, then from me. I’m confused and frustrated by what the officer said. He said this was an “incident” not an “accident” because the vehicle was stopped at the time. So there was no requirement for the Uber driver to go to the collision reporting centre. He said this was really between the passenger and me. He said that I could go to the driver's insurance company for compensation, but this is a civil matter, and I’d have to go to small claims court if the passenger and driver’s insurance company did not voluntarily compensate me. I said, but she stopped illegally in a no stopping zone, and bicycle lane to let her passenger out. He said these are minor factors, the major issue is with the passenger. I said, this was in no way my fault. I’m riding my bike, someone opens their door on me, I’m bruised, my bike is unrideable and I’m left having to sue to get compensated?"

Facts about “doorings”:

The number of “doorings” is on the rise in Toronto.

According to Toronto Police, there were 132 in 2014, 175 in 2015, and 209 in 2016. Cycle Toronto states that these numbers are probably under reported. Doorings were previously listed on the Motor Vehicle Accident Report mandated by the province, but due to a change in 2011, they were removed. The Toronto Police now track them as “incidents” rather than “accidents.” Cycle Toronto has advocated that doorings fall back under the Motor Vehicle Accident Report system so that more accurate information can be collected.

Taxi and ride-sharing services

The taxi industry trains drivers how to interact with bikes, but ride-sharing driver training is much more cursory. There is a need for more stringent training for ride-sharing drivers. Some taxis have installed rear view mirrors on their rear doors so passengers can check for bicycles and other traffic before exiting the vehicle.

The Dutch Reach

In the Netherlands, all drivers are taught to open car doors with their right hand. This forces them to make a shoulder check opening the door. Passengers are also taught to open car doors with the hand farthest from the door. This has become known as “the Dutch reach.” Cycle Toronto has recommended that it become part of driver training in Ontario.

Background Information (Board)

(September 25, 2017) Motion to Reduce the Number of "Doorings" in Toronto from Chris Glover, Education Representative, Board of Health

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2017/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-107154.pdf>