



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Shortened Driving Tests and Lack of Retraining for Suspended Drivers Potentially Risk Safety on Ontario's Roads

(TORONTO) Reduced driving test requirements and limited retraining for suspended drivers potentially risk public safety on Ontario roads, Acting Auditor General Nick Stavropoulos said today.

“Ensuring drivers have effective training and are skilled at driving safely before receiving their licences is critical to keep Ontario’s roads safe,” said Stavropoulos.

The audit found that, in 2022, drivers who received two or more suspensions in the previous year had a fatal collision rate six times higher than the general driver population. The Ministry of Transportation rarely requires retraining for drivers with repeat driving suspensions due to dangerous driving behaviours, such as stunt racing or careless driving causing bodily harm. In contrast, the Ministry requires drivers with two alcohol- or drug-related suspensions to complete a remedial program.

Our audit also found that novice drivers from urban areas who took road tests at rural or suburban examination centres had collision rates 16 to 27 per cent higher than novice drivers who took tests near their home. As well, due to the Ministry’s lack of oversight of driving schools and instructors, many driving students might be given “route training” to practise the specific course of their driving exam, which could hamper the ability of an examiner to assess students’ driving skills.

The audit also found that the way COVID-19 backlogs in driver examinations were addressed may have impacted road safety. To reduce backlogs caused by pandemic closures, the Ministry eliminated certain manoeuvres from the highway road test without a full review and formal evaluation of road safety impacts. While the backlog was cleared in the fall of 2022, the reduced test still remains in place.

The audit also found that despite repeated failures over 10 years to deliver on performance targets, the Ministry awarded a new contract to the same company to continue delivering driver examination services for Ontario.

“For the safety of everyone on Ontario’s roads, the Ministry should ensure driver training and examinations are both monitored and evaluated, including retraining requirements for drivers with repeat driving suspensions,” said Stavropoulos.

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