

Police Carding Has No Effect On Crime Or Arrests: Report

TORONTO: Police street checks widely known as carding have little to no value as a law enforcement tool and should be significantly limited across Ontario, a judge tasked with reviewing the practice said Monday.

The report from Justice Michael Tulloch outlines certain circumstances in which police may have legitimate grounds to conduct street checks, or stop people at random and request identifying information.

But Tulloch, who was appointed by Ontario's previous Liberal government to assess the effectiveness of new regulations meant to limit the impact of street checks on racialized groups, said those circumstances are very specific and the practice as a whole should be sharply curtailed.

"There is little to no evidence that a random, unfocused collection of identifying information has benefits that outweigh the social cost of the practice," Tulloch wrote in his 310-page report.

"Given the social cost involved with a practice that has not definitively been shown to widely reduce or solve crime, it is recommended that the practice of randomly stopping individuals to gather their identifying information for the creation of a database for intelligence purposes be discontinued."

Tulloch, who previously led a review into Ontario's complex police oversight system, was asked to turn his attention to carding months after the previous government made moves to eliminate what it described as sys-



51 Division Community Response Unit of the Toronto Police, conducting a walk about with elders - offering support to homeless indigenous in Downtown Toronto. - Twitter

temic racism in law enforcement. Street checks started coming under intense scrutiny several years ago amid data showing officers were disproportionately stopping black and other racialized people.

In 2016, Ontario introduced rules dictating that police must inform people that they don't have to provide identifying information during street checks, and that refusing to co-operate or walking away cannot then be used as reasons to compel information.

The aim was to end arbitrary stops, especially those based on race, though anti-carding advocates have called for the practice to be abolished entirely. Race is prohibited as forming any part of a police officer's reason for attempting to collect someone's identifying information.

Police had long argued that street checks have value as an investigative tool, a notion Tulloch challenged in his report.

Tulloch's report also debunked the notion that carding had played a role in solving the high-profile killing of Cecilia Zhang, a nine-year-old girl who was abducted from her Toronto home in the middle of the night in 2003.

Among his many recommendations to the new Progressive Conservative government were some stating the 2016 rules should not apply in such cases.

But other recommendations advise the government to take a harder line on street checks, tightening definitions of terms such as "identifying information" and "suspicious circumstances" and broadening protections during vehicle stops.

Province Freezing Driver, Vehicle Fees

TORONTO: The Ontario Government is putting a stop to driver and vehicle fees that were set to increase on January 1, 2019.

This is the second round of driver and vehicle fee increases that the government has cancelled. In September, fees for driver's licences and road and knowledge tests were frozen.

"Families and businesses alike

will benefit from the freeze on fees," said Minister of Transportation Jeff Yurek. "We're leaving money in people's pockets, so they can spend it on the things that really matter to them."

"Today's announcement is more proof that Ontario is open for business," Yurek said.

The following fees are being frozen:

Product/Service	Scheduled	Fee will remain at
Passenger vehicle validation - South	\$126	\$120
Passenger vehicle validation - North	\$63	\$60
Commercial vehicle (<3k kg) personal use only (PUO) validation - South	\$126	\$120
Commercial vehicle (<3k kg) personal use only (PUO) validation - North	\$63	\$60
Commercial <3k kg business validation - South	\$126	\$120
Personalized licence plate	\$32 - \$318	\$15 - \$300
Oversize/overweight permits (single trip)	\$66.25 - \$714	\$65 - \$700
Oversize/overweight permits (non-single trip)	\$16.75 - \$448.75	\$16.50 - \$440
Heavy commercial validation fees	\$270.50 - \$4,786.75	\$265.25 - \$4,693
Farm vehicle validation (> 3000 kg)	\$160.25 - \$1,270.50	\$157 - \$1,245.50
Bus and school bus validation	\$137.50 - \$2,306	\$134.75 - \$2,260.75
Dealer/service permit for motor vehicle, trailer, motorcycle or motor assisted bicycle (motorcycle/other)	\$100 - \$179	\$98 - \$175
Manufacturer validation for motor vehicle or motorcycle	\$100 - \$179	\$98 - \$175
Replacements (driver's licence, enhanced driver's licence, driver instructor licence, commercial vehicle operators registration, oversize/overweight)	\$35.75	\$35
Commercial vehicle operator registration original, re-enter	\$255	\$250
Commercial vehicle operator registration renewal	\$51	\$50

Real Estate Sector Poised For Big Tech Disruption

TORONTO: Real estate agent Shawn Zigelstein remembers a time, just a few years ago, when a printer, scanner and fax machine were the most important tools of his trade. Now, those gadgets are nearly obsolete. "I don't even know the last time I sent a fax, to be honest with you," laughs Zigelstein, a sales rep with a Royal LePage brokerage in Richmond Hill, Ont.

"Oh the dilemmas we used to have were unbelievable. Now our clients can open their phone up, push a few buttons and the (offer) papers are signed."

Zigelstein says the adoption of technology in real estate has grown exponentially over the past few years and it's a trend he thinks will only grow as more options become available and realtors scramble to lure in the millennial market.

"The agents that are not adapting to this change are going to see their business drop considerably because they can't adapt fast enough," he said.

From smartphone apps like Loom, which allows realtors to remotely share screens and presentation slides with clients, to digital signatures that can be sent verified with phones and tablets, technology is shaping a new way for realtors do business.

Historically, the real estate industry has been a "laggard" when it comes to embracing technology, says Frank Magliocco, a partner at PwC Canada who specializes in the housing market.

"But I think what you're going to see now is a fairly significant ramp up in embracing that technology once it becomes more mainstream," he said. "It'll be increasingly important to remain and be competitive in the marketplace. Once you see these technologies prove out, you'll see more and more adoption."

According to PwC, proptech, broadly defined as technology used in the real estate market, was a US\$4.6 billion industry in Canada and the U.S. in 2016. Last year, that figure climbed to US\$7.3 billion, an indication that interest and opportunity in the space has also grown.

Magliocco says proptech, which he called the cousin to the banking industry's fintech, can refer to anything from online listings websites to smart buildings that use big data to automate heating and lighting to 3D printing homes.

"Think about the banking industry years ago, before fintech... banking had to be done in person, it came in and changed the entire business model. Now you deposit a cheque and transfer money and you can do everything on your phone," he said.

"Real estate used to be every transaction had to be heavy on the paper with lots of lawyers involved and surveyors going out to check the space and measure the space. That's not needed anymore."

Stephen Jagger, the co-founder of IMRE, a company that runs an artificial intelligence personal assistant for realtors, says technology is so embedded in daily life that clients expect to be able to use it in their real estate transactions. IMRE's chatbot can respond to basic questions from prospective clients on behalf of a realtor 24 hours a day through text and social networks. It uses machine learning to answer questions about a listing, such as price, the number of bedrooms and what school district the home is located in. Jagger says this type of technology doesn't replace a real estate agent, but like all good technology, it enhances their jobs. "It lets realtors focus on the high-level tasks, like showing a house, instead of answering random questions all the time."

However, Toronto realtor Cam Woolfrey says technology isn't going to make the real estate industry obsolete.

"(A realtor) with experience can make the experience," he said.

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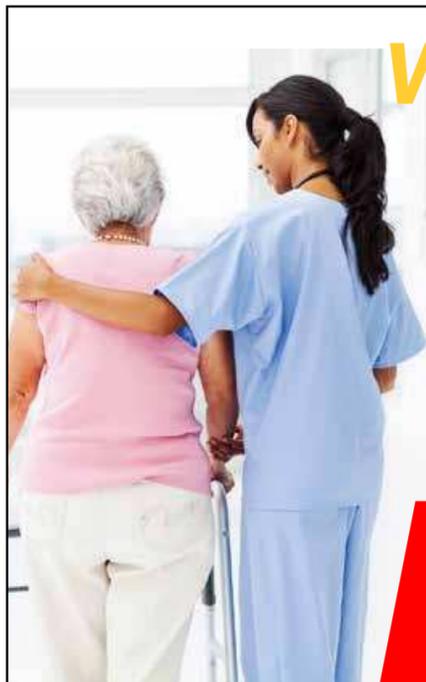
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