

Some Manitobans are not so friendly when sharing the roads

Let's review the Golden Rule of Driving, or C'mon buddy, would it really kill you to let me merge?

How do I put this without appearing rude? This is important, because this column is about being rude, so it's imperative that I am polite in my approach.

You see, I'd like to present my humble opinion on the "personality" of the traffic in our major cities.

Toronto is the City of Speed. If you've ever driven on the 401, you'll know exactly what I mean.

Nobody stops at stop signs in Montreal. And they don't even slow down at amber lights.

Vancouver is full of drivers capable of acting like jerks if only they had the room in the bumper-to-bumper traffic to do so. However, even the jerks realize that cooperation is the only way to navigate through the ridiculous road design, skinny lanes and three-lane merges.

Which brings us to Winnipeg. I hate to say this but so far, in my driving experience, the most



**Road
Wise**

**Paul
Allen**

prominent feature about traffic here is... the discourtesy of the drivers. And before my email inbox is flooded with hate mail, please understand that I'm not referring to all drivers in Winnipeg. Just some. I have a theory that 20 per cent of the population makes the other 80 per cent look bad.

Let me explain what I mean by discourteous.

Merge ahead

At some point or another we're going to run across that rotten sign that tells us to merge left because road workers are filling potholes (and swatting mosquitoes) up ahead.

OK, merge left. I dare you. Turn

your blinker on and see how long it takes before someone is kind enough to slow down and let you in. Rather than cutting someone off, I've ended up simply running out of lane and coming to a complete stop in front of the construction zone. I'm not alone here either; I've watched other drivers forced into the same situation.

The same holds true in a simple lane change. You can drive for blocks before somebody waves you in.

This is plain bad manners, folks. There's simply no excuse for driving like this.

Interestingly enough, I've been told you can always tell the drivers who've come into town from outside Winnipeg, because they're the first ones to ease off the gas and make room for the merging vehicle. Congratulations on showing selfish drivers how they should behave.

Here's another one. It's 4:30 p.m.,

and traffic's backed up at a red light. The light turns green, but the vehicles across the intersection haven't moved ahead one inch.

Nowhere to go? So what?

You don't enter the intersection until there's somewhere for you to go, right? Well, apparently that's wrong. What you should do is drive into the intersection anyway, one car after another. The goal is to entirely block the intersection with a solid line of traffic, so when the light finally turns red again, no one can move in any direction.

What is up with this? Clearly, making the light is more important than making an intelligent decision. You'll notice, too, that once these drivers block the intersection, they suddenly become fixated on whatever is directly in front of them... anything to avoid meeting the eyes of the people around them. Go ahead; pretend you don't see us. We see you,

and we're secretly hoping the driver you've blocked is your loan officer.

Oh, and one more thing. Driving a foot away from someone's bumper will not make them go any faster. It will make them angry, it can cause an accident, but it won't do anything else. So, here's a message from all the rational drivers to all the tailgaters... get off our bumpers before we all pay for it!!

I've spoken to many drivers here, and they all say it used to be better, but "something happened."

I'd like to hear from you. What are your pet driving peeves? What do you think "happened" to some Winnipeg drivers?

That's it for this week. Until next week, be **RoadWise**.

Paul Allen is Road Safety Manager for Manitoba Public Insurance. He would like to hear from you. His e-mail address is pallen@mpi.mb.ca and his mailing address is Room 824, 234 Donald Street, Box 6300, Winnipeg, MB R3C 4A4.