

taxi news 101

While new statistics indicate there has been a dramatic drop-off in crime against Toronto cab drivers in the past decade, the industry's leading safety advocate maintains some of the most severe crimes are still too common.

According to the Toronto Police Services Forensic Investigations Unit, since the introduction of the Taxi Driver Training Program in 1990 and safety measures like mandatory in-car security cameras, the number of armed robberies against cabbies has fallen from 140 in 1991, to 71 in 1998, to 40 in 2010; while the number of assaults has dropped off from 22 in 2008, to 17 in 2010. And, while statistics are not available, murders have also decreased significantly.

"We've seen about a 75 percent drop in overall crime against taxi drivers," says long-time owner/operator Gerald Manley. "Our program is working, but some of the most severe crimes, in my estimation, are still too high for instance, 40 armed robberies. The only way to address that is through driver education."

He maintains there is little, or no, "practical safety education" done at the school. "To put safety equipment on a table and show how it works is commendable, but does not educate the drivers on real-life situations that will occur during their driving careers, and how to avoid or deal with them," he states.