

Brenda Knight

A motorist's dropped pager ended 53 year old Brenda Knight's career as a traffic control person (TCP). With 27 years of experience at work zones and over five years as a TCP instructor, the South Surrey resident who enjoyed a life-long passion for horseback riding always anticipated hazards to motorists.



Having worked with the same crew for 9 years at Winvan Paving Ltd., Knight could predict what her workers were going to do and take the necessary precautionary steps to ensure that passing vehicles would remain safe.

"People think you stop them for no reason because they don't realize it's a precaution," says Knight. "They were stopped for their safety. I never thought I would get hit."

On a sunny July morning in 2005, the vehicles were at a full stop because of a red traffic light. Her crew was paving patches and she knew that the machine's operator would need to pave in another direction and would move into traffic. Anticipating the hazard to motorists, Knight stepped in front of a stopped vehicle.

"Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed the light had turned green. I glanced at the machine operator to signal that the traffic was being held. When I looked back at the vehicle, he was coming at me."

The driver was looking for his dropped pager and accidentally hit the gas pedal.

"I did have an escape route," Knight says "but I didn't have time to get out of the way."

She doesn't remember the impact.

Part of her vertebrae was crushed and she had brain damage from a concussion. Today, she suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and severe anxiety. She has yet to ride a horse since her accident.

Knight returned to work nine months later, concentrating on prevention. She now works three days a week as a Safety Officer for her employer.

"Winvan has been incredible. When I first started office work, I didn't have a clue. I was still so challenged with my memory, with my fatigue. My life has really changed. I have good days and bad."

Knight warns other TCPs to remain alert: "Even if a car is at full stop, don't relax. Don't let down your guard. Motorists don't see the work zone the way we do."

People also need to do their part and remain responsible when driving through work zones, "We see people reading, shaving, putting on make-up while they drive. It's a dangerous area that they're going through."