

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2008



The first long holiday weekend is approaching and statistics show more collisions occur during the summer months than at any other time of the year. Because the weather is better people think that risks are reduced, however the opposite is true. There are more drivers on the roads. Aggressive driving and fatigue can contribute to crashes.

Young Drivers of Canada offers these valuable summer driving tips to help ensure road safety for Canadian families. Peter Christianson, President of Young Drivers says, "Canada's drivers are some of the best in the world but it is easy to become complacent and forget the dangers involved in driving. We can each make a difference by leaving other drivers the space they need to avoid collision situations that are easily spotted when we are focused on our driving. When we help other drivers we help make it safe for everyone."

The following are Road Safety Tips provided by Young Drivers of Canada so we can all have a safe summer season.

1. **Buckle Up** - Research proves that seat belts save lives when worn correctly.
2. **Plan Your Route** - Plan your route ahead of time using an up-to-date map. Reading a map while driving is distracting so make a list of street/highway names where you need to turn. Give yourself extra time to avoid stress. Never follow and never lead another driver to your destination. That creates distractions, so intend to meet them there instead.
3. **Travel Well With Children** - When traveling with children be sure that they are properly buckled in. Make certain that they have things to keep them occupied to prevent them from distracting the driver. It is also a good idea to pull into rest areas for a break every two hours, to have a snack, and to let them run around to expend energy.
4. **Traffic Flow** - Let's face it, if everyone treated other drivers as they would like to be treated there would be a lot less problems. When a driver is entering a freeway as you are approaching in the right lane why not change lanes to the left. When a transport truck is close behind you in the middle of 3 lanes why not change lanes to the right. Remember this is the truck's passing lane.
5. **Wet Roads** - Not only can rain affect a driver's ability to see, it also affects your vehicle's traction. The grooves of a conventional tire are designed to channel water away. If the water is deep enough, the grooves shallow enough and the tire pressure low enough, the tire will lose all contact with the road and glide along on top of a layer of water. This is called hydroplaning or aquaplaning. While the vehicle is hydroplaning it is impossible to brake, accelerate or steer. Reducing speed in advance will allow for more control.
6. **Be Aware of Velocitization** - When we accelerate from 50km/h in the city to 100km/h on the freeway, it initially feels like we're going very fast. After a few minutes, it feels normal. This is velocitization. It makes driving on the freeway less scary and makes it easier to go with the flow of traffic. However, when we drop down to 80km/h to enter the next exit we feel as if we are going very slow even though we're likely entering the exit ramp much too fast. Avoid this problem by checking the ramp speed warning signs and glancing at the speedometer.
7. **Following Distance** - At city speeds, in good weather, the minimum safe following distance is 2 seconds and should be increased to 3 seconds on highways/freeways. The way to measure your following distance is to choose a point of reference ahead such as a building or post. When the vehicle in front passes that point, begin to count – one thousand and one, one thousand and two, etc. Your vehicle should not pass your point of reference until you reach the appropriate count. This gives you enough time to see, react and stop your vehicle safely.
8. **Changing Lanes** - While changing lanes is a very simple task, it produces thousands of collisions each year. The problem is that we cannot see all the potential problems through our mirrors alone. The proper lane change steps are: check the inside mirror to locate a space, signal, look at the side mirror on the way to checking the blind spot and then look ahead into your new lane before drifting over. A final inside mirror check once the change is completed will help ensure safe spacing behind you.
9. **Stay Awake** - Driving when you are tired is very dangerous. It reduces your ability to drive effectively. Your reaction time is slower, awareness is decreased, and judgment is impaired. Be sure that you are well rested before you get behind the wheel. If you are traveling a long distance, stop at least every two hours. Pull into a rest area and take a 15-minute break.

This summer let's all do our part to make Canada's roads the safest ever!

