

Road Safety

Background Information/Rationale for Focus

Motor Vehicle Collisions

For many Canadians, the riskiest part of their job is their time spent on the road driving. Motor vehicle collisions are the leading cause of injury and death at work¹. Statistics from Canadian workers' compensation boards show that in 2001, motor vehicle collisions accounted for 31 per cent of all injury fatalities as well as 10,000 time loss injuries.² This does not include off-hours crashes, which result in injury or death, absence from the workplace and utilization of health benefits for rehabilitation.



Collisions can have a significant impact on employees and the employer. According to the Ontario Road Safety Annual Report, there were a total of 9,594 motor vehicle collisions in Waterloo Region resulting in 19 fatalities and 3,197 injuries in 2005.³

Drinking and Driving

According to the Ministry of Transportation, each year, about 16,000 people are convicted of drinking and driving with a blood alcohol concentration above 0.08 in Ontario – about two people each hour.⁴ About a quarter of the province's annual road fatalities are alcohol-related.

A new law, Bill 203, Safer Roads for a Safer Ontario Act, targets impaired driving by:

- Creating escalating administrative sanctions for repeat drinking drivers measuring 0.05 to 0.08 blood alcohol concentration (the “warn” range) - **effective May 1, 2009**

Distracted Driving

Using either a **hand-held** or **hands-free** cell phone while driving makes it four times more likely that you will be involved in a collision.⁵ Even a moment's distraction can be dangerous. A second or two may not seem like much, but at 50 km/hr, you will travel 14 metres in one second. A lot can happen in a second or two. Being distracted causes drivers to react more slowly to traffic conditions or events, such as another vehicle stopping to make a left turn, or pulling out from a side road. Distracted drivers fail more often to notice or recognize potential hazards, including pedestrians, bicycles or debris on the road.⁶

Bill 118, Countering Distracted Driving and Promoting Green Transportation Act, has passed and will come into effect in fall of 2009. This Act states, “Driving while holding or using a hand-held wireless communication device or electronic entertainment device is prohibited”. Workplaces need to ensure that their policies and practices are in compliance with this new law.

Seat Belts

The latest national figures show that 39% of occupants who were killed in motor vehicle collisions and 18% of those who were seriously injured were not wearing their seat belts.⁷ Everyone in the vehicle needs to wear a seat belt every time.

Children need rear facing infant seats for the first year, forward facing tethered seats until 40 pounds and booster seats until at least 8 years of age, 80 pounds or over 4 feet 10 inches tall.

Share the Road

All road users have rights and responsibilities. It is important that we consider the needs of all.

Motorists. Watch for vulnerable road users and give them space and time. Be alert. Watch for other users and sudden behaviour changes. Pay attention especially at intersections. Watch for other road users whenever you are crossing a bicycle lane or sidewalk.

Goals For The Workplace To Strive For

1. To provide a supportive and safe working environment to reduce the number of motorized vehicle collisions and employee related injuries.
2. To recognize and reduce potential health risks or health hazards within the work environment in relation to motorized vehicles.
3. To encourage active and supportive educational opportunities and ongoing safety assessments of motorized vehicle use, knowledge and learning needs, including child restraints and car seats.

Getting Started

Workplace Wellness Team, Environmental Scan and Needs Assessment

- Create a workplace wellness team, which includes employees and management to gauge your workers needs and interests;
- Complete an environmental scan to determine how supportive the workplace is regarding healthy eating and physical activity;
- Conduct a needs assessment to determine what healthy living initiatives are important to employees; and,
- Based on the results of your environmental scan and needs assessment, consult with the workplace wellness team to decide which interventions fit with the requirements of your workplace.

Awareness Raising

- Use bulletin boards and displays featuring resources related to motorized vehicle safety, collision prevention and tips for proper installation and maintenance of child safety seats;
- Dedicate an accessible area to display pamphlets and resources regarding the safe operation of motorized vehicles, license requirements, legislation, collision prevention, child safety promotion, car seat education and community resource information; and,
- Include short articles in an internal newsletter or staff emails (check websites and local newspaper for relevant articles).

Skill Building

- Incorporate presentations/workshops discussing issues of motor vehicle safety and driver/passenger responsibilities, car seat safety, and injury prevention based on employee interest and identified needs, through “lunch and learn” sessions or training workshops; and,
- Provide employees reimbursement/paid time off, allowing employees/Wellness Committee/Health & Safety Committee members to attend training courses related to motorized vehicle safety/injury prevention.

Workplace Example:

Defensive driving courses assist employees in recognizing and controlling hazards associated with driving. Support defensive driver training programs for employees by offering courses or subsidies for employees.

Creating a Supportive Environment

- Provide on-going education for management and employees related to motorized vehicle safety;
- Reinforce motorized vehicle safety as a primary focus within the work environment;
- Ensure regular maintenance of company vehicles and develop a system for employees to report concerns;
- Perform regular inspections of company parking lot to ensure hazards are eliminated and safety is promoted (e.g. signage, pavement markings, lighting, delivery routes, entrances/exits etc.);
- Regularly review workplace collision statistics, implementing recommendations to reduce and eliminate hazards to prevent further collisions;
- Eliminate unnecessary driving by employees. Encourage car pooling and alternative transportation to/from and during work hours;
- Set a maximum on the number of hours your employees can drive in a day. Make sure there are rest breaks taken during this time; and,
- Ensure that your employees who drive as part of their work duties have a valid and appropriate driver’s license for the class of vehicle they drive. Take a photocopy and put it in their personnel file.

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Healthy Workplace Policy Suggestions

- Ensure policies for company owned vehicles detailing service, maintenance, driver qualifications, etc. are developed and implemented;
- Develop and implement a policy regarding driving on company time which provides details on parking, cell phone use, accepted speed, conduct, etc.;
- Have clear policies on alcohol and drug use. If an employee has a motorized vehicle collision while under the influence, your company could be held liable;
- Allow flex-time/flexible scheduling policies for personal leave to attend personal car service appointments; and,
- Allow flex-time/flexible scheduling policies for “severe weather days”.



Telephone consultation is available through **Project Health: 519-883-2287**

Region of Waterloo Public Health Resources

Project Health Resources: (call Project Health phone line @ 519-883-2287)

Other Services:
 Phone consultation for motorized vehicle safety policy development

Public Health Resource Centre:
 To borrow teaching kits/books/video resources please call: 519-883-2256 .
 To order pamphlets: email phrc@region.waterloo.on.ca or call the automated order line at: 519-883-2374 or order online at [www.region.waterloo.on.ca/ph -- Resources/](http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/ph--Resources/)

Resource Centre/Pamphlets
 What You Should Know about Air Bags

Displays:
 Road Safety Display

Community Resources

- Infant & Toddler Safety Association519-570-0181
- St. John Ambulance Association519-740-8895

Internet Resources

www.projectehalth.ca

Canada Safety Council

www.safety-council.org/info/traffic/traffic.htm

Health Canada

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english

Ministry of Transportation

www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/topics.htm

Region of Waterloo Public Health

www.region.waterloo.on.ca/ph

Safe Kids Canada

www.safekidscanada.ca

Smartrisk

www.smartrisk.ca

Transport Canada

www.tc.gc.ca/roadsafety

The Transportation Health & Safety Association

www.thsao.on.ca

References

- ¹ Workplace Safety and Insurance Board of Ontario (WSIB). (2006). *Road safety*. Retrieved December 14, 2006 from: www.wsib.on.ca/wsib/wsibsite.nsf/Public/referenceroadsafety
- ² Association of Workers' Compensation Board of Canada. (2006). *Work injuries and diseases*. Retrieved December 14, 2006 from: www.awcbc.org/english/NWISP_Stats.asp.
- ³ Ministry of Transportation. (2004). *Ontario road safety annual report 2004*. Toronto: Author.
- ⁴ Ministry of Transportation. (2009). *Bill 203 - Safer Roads for a Safer Ontario Act*. Retrieved from: <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/about/bill203.shtml>
- ⁵ Ministry of Transportation. (2009). *Motorists and cellular phones*. Retrieved from: <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/topics/cellular.shtml>
- ⁶ Canadian Automobile Association. *What is Distracted Driving?* Retrieved from: <http://www.caa.ca/driventodistracted/what/index.html>
- ⁷ Transport Canada. (2009). *Percentage of driver and passenger fatalities and serious injuries where victims were not using seat belts, 2002-2003*. Retrieved from: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/roadsafety/tp-tp3322-2003-page7-637.htm>