

Files taken from Office of Traffic Safety – Communication Toolkit 2011

March - Occupant Restraints

I. Key Messages

The following key messages can be used to support the Occupant Restraint Communication Campaign:

- What's holding you back? Protect yourself against the unpredictable.
- Seatbelts do save lives.
- This is about a simple action that could make the difference between life and death.
- Buckle up in all seats of the vehicle.
- If you do not buckle up – you become a deadly weapon to others in the vehicle.
- It takes seconds to buckle up and a lifetime to make up for a loss.
- You can drive without wearing one, but you might not be here to drive again.
- Seatbelts are the single most cost effective life saving device we have to protect us in a motor vehicle collision.

II. Fact Sheet

The use of occupant restraints reduces the likelihood of sustaining an injury and the severity of injury decreases as well. Research and collision investigations show that seat belts increase the chances of survival in a collision by 50 per cent. According to Transport Canada, almost 40 per cent of drivers and passengers killed in collisions were not wearing their seatbelt at the time of the crash.

Facts to Know

- In Alberta, wearing a seatbelt is required by law.
- In Alberta, the fine for not wearing a seatbelt is \$115. Drivers are also responsible for the proper restraint of children under 16.
- Passengers are not exempt from the consequences of fines, injuries or deaths resulting from not wearing a seatbelt.
- Occupants using a restraint reduce the likelihood of sustaining an injury and the severity of injury decreases.
- Seatbelts save about a 1000 lives per year in Canada.
- Seat belts distribute the force of a collision evenly to the stronger parts of a person's body. In a crash, a vehicle traveling 50 kilometers per hour comes to an abrupt stop in 1/100th of a second. At 50 kilometers per hour, an unrestrained person, weighing 80 kilograms (176 pounds), will strike whatever they hit first with a force of 2,785 kilograms (6,215 pounds).

- Airbags only function properly if the occupant is restrained in a proper position by a seat belt. Airbags deploy at an explosive speed and can cause injury if the occupant is not properly positioned. Airbags are a supplemental device.
- Vehicles are designed with an engineered life space which can withstand the force of most impacts. Seatbelts keep occupants in this space where they are safest.
- In a collision, one unrestrained occupant increases the risk for all occupants in the vehicle. An unrestrained occupant may hit something or someone inside the vehicle; or they may be thrown from their vehicle into another object.
- Child safety restraints are required by law for children under the age of 6 who weigh less than 18 kilograms (40 pounds).
- A child under 10 kilograms (22 pounds) and one year of age is safest in a rear facing child restraint seat. Be sure to consult the owner's manual for guidelines.
- Forward facing child restraint seats should have shoulder straps that originate above the shoulders and should not have a back lower than the middle of the child's ears.
- Booster seats are recommended for children under the age of 9, 18 to 36 kilograms (80 pounds) or 145 centimeters (58 inches).
- Without a booster seat, a child is four times more likely to suffer a significant injury or to suffer a head injury in the event of a collision.
- Children under the age of 12 are safest in the back seat of a vehicle in proper restraints based on their age, height and weight.

III. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

I am a good driver. Do I still need to wear a seatbelt, even for a short distance?

You cannot control every one else's behaviour on the road. Seatbelts dramatically increase your chances of survival in a collision, regardless of who is driving the other vehicle.

What is the proper position of a seatbelt? What if the seatbelt is uncomfortable?

The seat belt should be positioned securely across the hip bones and across the shoulder. A properly positioned seatbelt should not be uncomfortable. Never put the shoulder belt under the arm or behind the back. In a collision this could cause fatal injuries.

What if there are more people in a vehicle than seatbelts?

A driver cannot transport more people in a vehicle than there are seatbelts. Sharing seatbelts is dangerous as occupants will hit each other during a collision increasing the likelihood of injury.

When is it time to place children in a forward facing child restraint?

Always follow the weight and height guidelines in the manufacturer's instructions. Even if a child's feet are touching the back of the vehicle seat in a rear facing restraint it does not mean they should be moved to a forward facing seat. Infants should remain rear facing until one year of age and they can pull themselves into a standing position.

Can a child restraint that has been used in a collision continue to be used?

No, this is not recommended. While the child restraint may appear to be fine, there could be microscopic cracks in the shell, weakened areas in the harness or seat frame and the restraint would not hold together in a subsequent collision.

Can a second hand child restraint seat be used?

Although it is not recommended, a second hand car seat can be used. First, make sure it is not more than 10 years old, check the expiry date for the seat, ensure that it has not been used in a collision and that all parts are in good condition.

Why should parents ensure their children are properly secured in booster seats?

Booster seats position the seatbelt over the strongest bones in the child's body. It helps position the lap belt across the bones of the hips, not across the soft abdomen. It also places the shoulder belt across the chest, preventing the upper body and head from slamming forward during a collision.

What about using an after market seatbelt adjuster?

The use of after market seatbelt adjusters for adults or for children, are not recommended as they are not government regulated.

Should pregnant women wear a seatbelt?

Yes, seatbelts are the best protection for both mother and unborn child. Pregnant women should sit as upright as possible with the shoulder belt across their chest above the belly, and the lap belt low so that it pulls downward on their pelvic bones and not on their abdomen.

Where can I find more information about occupant restraint in Alberta?

Additional information and resources can be found on the Saferoads web site at: <http://www.saferoads.com/vehicles/restraints.html> and <http://www.saferoads.com/vehicles/childseats.html>.

Another valuable source of information is the Alberta Occupant Restraint Program web site: <http://albertaseatbelts.ca> and <http://www.boosterseats.ca>.

IV. Advertising for Occupant Restraints

To be determined

April - Speed

I. Key Messages

The following key messages can be used to support the Speed Communication Campaign:

- Speed limits save lives everyday – maybe today it's yours.
- The faster you go, the longer it takes to stop. The faster you drive, the harder you hit.
- By the time you realize you're going too fast, it may be too late.
- Speeding saves little time.

II. Fact Sheet

Driving a few km/h over the posted speed limit:

- Reduces your ability to steer safely around curves or objects on the road.
- Decreases your field of vision and your peripheral vision.
- Extends the distance required to stop your vehicle in emergency situations.
- Reduces your ability to obey traffic control devices such as red lights and stop signs.
- Increases the chances that you will lose control of your vehicle.
- Reduces the effectiveness of seat belts and other safety devices such as airbags and side impact beams.
- Increases probability of death or injury if there is a crash.
- Reduces the effectiveness of roadside hardware such as barriers, crash cushions and bridge rails.
- This is about getting to your destination safely.
- When you slow down, you increase safety for you and your passengers as well as the other motorists on the road.

Speed limit in school and playground zones:

- The speed limit in both urban and rural school zones is 30 km/h and is in effect on school days from 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. unless other times are posted by the municipality
- The speed limit in a playground zone is 30 km/h and is in effect from 8:30 a.m. to one hour after sunset.
- A vehicle is not permitted to pass another vehicle traveling in the same direction in either school or playground zones during the times that these zones are in effect.

Emergency vehicles and construction zones:

- Motorists must slow to 60 km/h, **or less** if the posted speed is lower, when passing emergency vehicles or tow trucks stopped with their lights flashing. Fines for speeding in these areas will be double the regular amount.
- If there are two or more traffic lanes in the same direction as the emergency vehicle or tow truck, passing vehicles need only slow down in the lane immediately beside the stopped emergency vehicle. Vehicles traveling in other lanes, including oncoming lanes, may maintain their speed but should proceed with caution.
- Emergency vehicles include fire, police, ambulance, tow trucks, and a vehicle used by a gas disconnection unit of a public utility or a designated emergency response unit.
- In construction zones, motorists must observe the posted speed. When workers are present, fines for speeding in these areas will be doubled. This is where workers are on or near the road, operating heavy equipment, directing traffic, or using hand tools within the construction zone. Drivers need to look out for workers who could be less visible behind construction equipment.

III. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What percentage of fatal crashes involves speeding?

Three out of every ten fatal crashes, or 30 per cent, involves driving at a speed unsafe for the prevailing road conditions.

What does the maximum speed limit mean?

Posted speed limits are the maximum speeds permitted if conditions are favourable.

What can you do?

- Obey all posted speed limits on roads as well as in school zones and playground areas, construction zones, and when passing emergency vehicles.
- Use common sense—slow down in bad weather, at night, and when driving on poorly lit roads.
- Slow down on unfamiliar roads.

What are the demerits for speeding?

Speeding / exceeding limit by more than 50 km/h (mandatory court appearance required)	6 points
Speeding / exceeding limit by more than 30 km/h but not more than 50 km/h	4 points
Speeding / unreasonable rate	4 points
Speeding / exceeding limit by more than 15 km/h but not more than 30 km/h	3 points
Speeding / exceeding limit by up to 15 km/h	2 points

How many demerit points can a driver lose before their licence is automatically suspended?

Anyone who accumulates 15 or more demerit points in a two-year period will have their licence automatically suspended for one month. At eight demerits, the motorist will receive a courtesy notice. When a driver under the Graduated Driver Licensing program accumulates four or more, but less than eight points, they receive a courtesy notice of point standing. When an accumulation of eight or more points occurs within a two-year period, a Graduated Driver's licence will be automatically suspended for one month.

Is it more acceptable to speed if you are an experienced driver?

No. Speeding increases the distance necessary to stop a vehicle. In fact, just a small increase in speed greatly increases the amount of room you will need to stop; for example at 110 km/h, a vehicle in proper working order takes 126 metres to stop, while at 50 km/h a vehicle can stop in 37 metres.

Driving too fast doesn't allow drivers enough time to react to traffic signals such as red lights or stop signs, or other potential hazards that may be present, like children darting into traffic.

What is the speed limit at a crosswalk with flashing lights?

If the lights are flashing at a crosswalk, the maximum speed is 30 km/h, even if the pedestrian has finished crossing the road. As long as the lights are flashing, drivers must slow down.

What are the rules of driving through a construction zone?

When driving through a construction zone, motorists must observe the posted speed limit. When workers are present, the fines for speeding in these areas are doubled.

Why should a driver slow down for construction zones when there is no work being done?

Even if it seems there is no activity in a construction zone, there may be other less obvious hazards such as loose gravel chips and uneven pavement that can be dangerous and cause damage to vehicles traveling at high speeds.

Where can I find more information about speeding?

Log on to www.saferoads.com.

IV. Advertising for Speed

To be determined

**Government
of Alberta** ■

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