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Driver Educator's Newsletter

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Auto\$mart DEN

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Fuel efficiency now "required teaching" in Ontario

Fuel efficiency is now an element of the driver education curriculum across Ontario as a result of a major undertaking by the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) to update and modernize the province's beginner driver education (BDE) curriculum.

"In 2007, we embarked on a project with the Canadian Standards Association to bring together a diverse range of stakeholders who might be interested in helping us update the beginner driver education curriculum," explains Keith Madill, BDE Program Manager with MTO. "These stakeholders included driver educators themselves, the insurance industry, research organizations, academics, the Road Safety Educators' Association and the Ontario Safety League. NRCan [Natural Resources Canada] was also invited to participate because we were interested in incorporating fuel efficiency as an element of the curriculum."

Note: Some of the documents, program names and graphics shown have not been produced by the Government of Canada and are not available in both official languages.

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Ways to expand the fuel efficiency subtopic in the curriculum include providing beginner drivers with information on the following:

- \$ how to purchase a fuel-efficient vehicle
- \$ following the manufacturer's recommended maintenance schedule
- \$ how poorly maintained vehicles can consume more fuel
- \$ keeping tires inflated at the manufacturer's recommended pressure
- \$ how and when to measure tire pressure
- \$ the impact that under-inflated tires can have on fuel consumption
- \$ avoiding unnecessary idling
- \$ the effects of speed on fuel consumption
- \$ alternative fuels and technologies

The group developed new standards for BDE, which have been approved by MTO. The standards establish minimum requirements that driver education schools must meet or exceed in their curriculum. They provide a framework for a more intensive driver education program, with a focus on skills and behaviours to reduce collision risk for novice drivers.

“Our primary goal is to produce safe drivers, but the new standards also address a lot of concerns raised by NRCan regarding fuel efficiency, including respect for the environment,” says Madill. “Fuel efficiency is now a specific element of the curriculum standard, but it also ties in with other components, such as safe driving techniques. This is consistent with the NRCan approach.”

The main reference to fuel efficiency falls under a curriculum standard entitled “Respect and Responsibility.” One of the learning outcomes identified by the standard is “respect for the environment as it relates to operating a vehicle.” Under this outcome, environmentally conscious and efficient driving behaviour is a required teaching topic, and fuel efficiency is a subtopic.

Other subtopics in the “Respect and Responsibility” standard include planning safer and more efficient activities and routes, the economic benefits of driving efficiently, mandatory emissions testing, and proper disposal of cars, fluids, batteries and tires.

“There are also ways fuel efficiency can be brought into other elements of the BDE curriculum standards,” says Madill. For example, proper tire inflation is also a required teaching topic under the “Vehicle Handling” standard, where the overall goal is to teach safe and responsible driving to avoid collisions. Other required teaching topics include speed control, deceleration and braking, time management, space management, stopping distances, braking distances and following too closely. Issues such as aggressive driving and proactive versus reactive driving are addressed elsewhere in the curriculum standards.

Driver education schools must have the new curriculum approved by MTO and in place by April 17, 2009. High school BDE programs have until September 2009 to comply with the new curriculum standards.

For more information on the project, visit the BDE Curriculum Standards Web site at www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/dandv/driver/gradu/curriculum/index.shtml.

Study reveals high level of satisfaction with Auto\$mart

But there's always room for improvement!

The verdict is in: Interim results from a study involving more than 200 driver educators across Canada reveal a high level of user satisfaction with the revamped Auto\$mart Driver Education Kit, launched in 2005 with a strengthened focus on the link between fuel efficiency and safe driving. At the same time, the study confirms that opportunities exist to improve the kit and expand its use among driver educators across Canada.

Undertaken by Corporate Research Associates Inc. on behalf of NRCan, the study aimed to evaluate the use and effectiveness of the Auto\$mart kit, explore barriers to its use and determine how Auto\$mart can be improved to better meet the needs of educators and students alike.

“We’re pleased with the results to date and look forward to receiving more details and recommendations,” says Charles Crispim, Senior Manager with ecoENERGY for Personal Vehicles. “NRCan is committed to involving driver educators in the evolution of Auto\$mart, and we appreciate the time and effort that so many educators have devoted to the 2007–2008 Auto\$mart Usage and Retention Study.”

While 70 percent of study participants indicated that they were either very or completely satisfied with the Auto\$mart program, some suggested that the presentation and delivery of materials could be improved and that updated and more detailed information could be included in the kit. More information on alternative fuel technologies and vehicles would also be welcomed by many educators.

Asked about their use of program tools, 70 percent of study participants indicated that they always or often use the video when delivering lessons from the Auto\$mart kit. The second most commonly used tool is the Instructor’s Guide (used always or often by 50 percent of respondents), followed by the Auto\$mart tip cards (35 percent), the Student Workbook (29 percent) and the CD-ROM (28 percent).

The survey also reveals that most instructors (68 percent) cover Auto\$mart over multiple in-class sessions. Only 28 percent preferred to cover Auto\$mart in a single session. The length of time devoted to fuel efficiency during classroom instruction varied, with 43 percent of instructors spending from 45 minutes to 2 hours to cover the topic.

Among the few instructors who indicated that they do not use Auto\$mart, the most common reason cited was a lack of available time. According to Crispim, this underscores the need to better inform educators about how the kit can be used to strengthen existing teaching programs.

“The Auto\$mart materials are designed so educators can easily integrate them into existing programs,” explains Crispim. “For example, when discussing speeding or aggressive driving, Auto\$mart materials can be used to reinforce the message that these behaviours are not only unsafe but also a waste of fuel and money. Fuel efficiency content doesn’t have to replace existing curriculum materials or lengthen instruction time, but it can supplement lessons already being taught in the classroom.”

Workshops are held regularly across Canada to train educators on how to integrate Auto\$mart materials into their programs. However, the survey shows that about 60 percent of driver educators across Canada have not taken advantage of this training.

The study also involved more than 300 students who were surveyed to assess their level of understanding and retention of Auto\$mart messages. Results from the student portion of the study will be included in the next edition of *Auto\$mart D.E.N.*



What modules are used – and how often?

The 2007–2008 Auto\$mart Usage and Retention Study reveals that all five modules in the Auto\$mart program are well-used. In order of preference:

- **Module 1: “What Is Fuel Efficiency, and Why Is It Important?” – used by 85 percent of respondents**
- **Module 4: “Making Fuel-Efficient Decisions” – 82 percent**
- **Module 2: “Behind the Wheel” – 79 percent**
- **Module 3: “Understanding Your Vehicle” and**
- **Module 5: “The Big Picture” – 73 percent**



“Signs of Change” in rural New Brunswick



Drivers in Carleton County, New Brunswick, came across a whole new set of road signs last summer. A local environmental group had launched an innovative public outreach project designed to encourage people to adopt fuel-efficient driving habits.

Called “Signs of Change,” the project is an initiative of the Falls Brook Centre (FBC), a sustainable community demonstration and training centre in South Knowlesville, New Brunswick. It aims to remind drivers that simple personal actions can make a big difference in reducing fuel consumption and air pollution. To that end, four stickers were produced that can be placed on or in a vehicle to encourage drivers – and others on the road – to

“One of the things we have done is going to festivals and fairs throughout Carleton County, usually along with our climate change bus, *Big Blue*, which tends to attract a lot of attention,” explains Julie Stinson, Coordinator of Education and Outreach at FBC. “We asked people to sign a pledge form to reduce their fuel consumption and emissions. People who signed the pledge were given an information package, which includes the stickers, and a tire gauge.”

Once the fair season was over, the emphasis shifted to working with communities and schools. The local school board, for example, agreed to install no-idling signs at schools throughout Carleton County. FBC also trained school bus drivers on how to avoid idling. Moreover, Grade 9 and 10 students taking visual arts classes participated in a contest to design a new “no-idling” sticker. The winning entry will be installed in all school buses in the county. More importantly, the contest got students thinking about fuel efficiency even before they learn how to drive.



- \$ check tire pressure weekly
- \$ try carpooling to work
- \$ avoid idling
- \$ buy a fuel-efficient vehicle



“Everyone is concerned about the price of fuel right now, so this is an excellent way to reach out to them about a topic that is current,” says Stinson.

Visit www.fallsbrookcentre.ca./signs for more information.

New Brunswick Lung Association promotes proper tire inflation

The New Brunswick Lung Association is offering free tire-pressure clinics in communities across the province to remind drivers that proper tire maintenance is not only important for road safety and long tire life but also results in better fuel economy, which in turn reduces emissions of greenhouse gases and pollutants from vehicle exhausts.

“We have a display unit that includes a tire mounted on a wheel and an air compressor,” explains Arthur Thomson, Director of Environmental Initiatives. “We take this to different locations in the province where people tend to congregate, such as Service New Brunswick locations, and invite them to learn how to properly check pressure and inflate tires.”

The association also works directly with refuelling stations. In this case, volunteers approach people at the pumps, offer them information on fuel efficiency and then invite them to visit the station’s air pump for a tire pressure demonstration.

“We ask participants to sign a commitment form in which they pledge to check their tire pressure once a month,” says Thomson. “They may also agree to tell others about the need to maintain proper tire pressure, effectively becoming ambassadors for the program. When we follow up with these people, we find that about 80 percent do check their tire pressure on a monthly basis. And some may have more than one vehicle, so the impact is magnified.”

More than two thirds of personal vehicles have at least one tire not properly inflated.



For more information, contact Arthur Thomson at 506-455-8961 or arthur.thomson@nb.lung.ca. Information on proper tire maintenance is also available at vehicles.nrcan.gc.ca.

Buying a new vehicle?

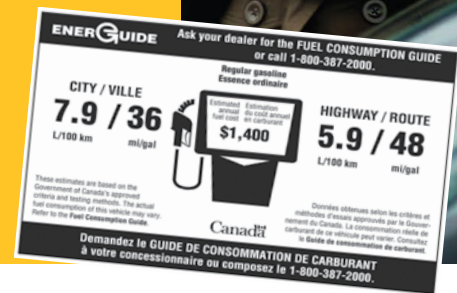
Start by looking at the EnerGuide label

As a driver educator, you understand better than many that purchasing a fuel-efficient vehicle can save you a lot of money, especially in these times of skyrocketing fuel prices. If you are in the market for a new vehicle and wondering where to start, look no further than the EnerGuide label.

An EnerGuide label is attached to all new light-duty vehicles sold in Canada and shows the vehicle's fuel consumption rating for city and highway driving. The label also shows the vehicle's estimated annual fuel cost (based on 20 000 kilometres of driving, 55 percent in the city and 45 percent on the highway). Comparing the estimated annual fuel costs of different models can quickly show how much money you can save by purchasing a fuel-efficient vehicle.

It's also a good idea to introduce your students to the EnerGuide label. Although they may not be purchasing a vehicle soon, it's never too early to learn how the label can help them make the right choice. Don't forget to remind students that purchasing a fuel-efficient vehicle is also good for the environment, because the less fuel a vehicle uses, the fewer emissions it produces.

For more information on how fuel consumption ratings are calculated, as well as ratings for all new light-duty vehicles sold in Canada, visit vehicles.nrcan.gc.ca.



Update on the five-phase fuel efficiency strategy

NRCan's ecoENERGY for Personal Vehicles program uses a five-step strategy to promote safe, fuel-efficient driving. The program is working closely with provincial and territorial governments to implement this strategy. See the following table for an update on the progress in each jurisdiction.

- Phase I.** Include fuel efficiency messages in handbooks for new drivers.
- Phase II.** Include questions about fuel efficiency on exams for new drivers.
- Phase III.** Add a mandatory component on fuel efficiency to their driver training curriculum.
- Phase IV.** Make other Office of Energy Efficiency materials available to the public through licensing bureaus.
- Phase V.** Provide a link from their driver training and licensing Web sites to the Auto\$mart Web site.

Province/Territory	Phase I.	Phase II.	Phase III.	Phase IV.	Phase V.
Alberta	X	X	X		
British Columbia	X		X	X	X
Manitoba	X	X	X	X	X
New Brunswick	X				
Newfoundland & Labrador	X	X		X	X
Nova Scotia	X		X		X
Ontario	X		X		X
Prince Edward Island	X	X		X	X
Quebec	X	X	X		X
Saskatchewan	X		X		X
Northwest Territories	X			X	
Nunavut					
Yukon Territory	X			X	X

Highlighted areas indicate recent developments.

In the D.E.N.

Driving is an activity that involves continuous decision making. Should I increase or decrease my speed, move into a different lane of traffic or maintain my current speed and position?

with Ben Estrada

As driver educators, a huge part of our job is to teach students how to make the right decisions behind the wheel. Good decisions generally do not involve rapid acceleration or deceleration or sudden changes in position – all of which can increase fuel consumption and reduce road safety. Bad decisions, on the other hand, can have consequences ranging from mild disruptions in traffic flow to major collisions that result in injury or loss of life.

Good decision making, then, is the key to safe and fuel-efficient driving. In fact, it may be the most important factor in good driving.

When talking to students about how driving decisions affect safety and fuel economy, I find it helpful to focus on the following steps:

Isolate – Keep space around your vehicle by using a three-second minimum following distance, staying out of the blind spot of other drivers and not allowing other vehicles to travel in your blind spot.

Stabilize – Drive predictably, so others on the road know your intentions. Use the lane of least resistance, keep your speed constant and make smooth and systematic lane changes.

Separate – Handle risks one at a time. Avoid driving into a collision trap by “easing” left or right, rather than “swerving,” and slowing down to avoid hard braking.

Compromise – Use space and time to handle situations where two or more risks cannot be separated. Reduce speed or accelerate, as the situation dictates, and steer your vehicle to another position on the road to acquire space and minimize risk.

Teaching skills and habits that improve road safety – and by extension, reduce fuel consumption and pollution – should be our primary goal as educators. It’s what students and society expect of us.

Ben Estrada is an Auto\$mart Master Trainer with Brisa Driving School Inc.

Auto\$mart tours Manitoba

Driver educators across Manitoba received guidance on how to use the Auto\$mart Driver Education Kit to bolster their classroom and in-vehicle teaching, courtesy of a three-city tour in September 2008 by Charles Crispim, Senior Manager with ecoENERGY for Personal Vehicles.

A series of one-hour seminars was delivered as part of Manitoba Public Insurance's (MPI's) annual "in-service" training sessions with driver educators in Winnipeg (over three days), Brandon and Flin Flon. MPI, a provincial Crown corporation, is the only organization authorized to deliver driver education in Manitoba.

"The sessions were an opportunity to have a high-level discussion about the key elements of the Auto\$mart approach, including the benefits of fuel efficiency, eco-driving, the importance of proper maintenance and making smart vehicle purchase decisions," says Crispim. "Then we provided some information about the kit itself and explained how the materials could be integrated into their programs."

Dustin Dvorak, Driver Education Curriculum Development and Training Support Specialist with MPI, says the Auto\$mart training was invaluable. "Our in-service training reaches about 225 instructors from across the province who are associated with our program. It was important for us to have these sessions because Auto\$mart is part of our curriculum and is used by all of our instructors."



**Manitoba
Public Insurance**

**Société d'assurance
publique du Manitoba**

MPI greens its fleet with dozens of hybrid vehicles

Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) – a leading Canadian proponent of fuel-efficient driving and an important Auto\$mart partner – is putting its words into action by "greening" its fleet with the purchase of almost three dozen hybrid vehicles.

"A lot of driving instructors in the province use MPI vehicles to deliver in-car training," explains Dustin Dvorak, Driver Education Curriculum Development and Training Support Specialist with MPI. "Last September, when it came time to replace some of our older vehicles, we decided to go with hybrids. We have now purchased 35 hybrids for driver training, which represents about half the fleet."

Dvorak says, "The hybrids were purchased primarily for their fuel efficiency and use of new technology. In Manitoba, there is a big push now to promote fuel efficiency and move toward cleaner resources."



The hybrid vehicles – all Honda Civics – will be used by driver educators in all regions of the province. They are also used for in-service training and testing of driver educators themselves.

"We've had the vehicles for only a few weeks now, but the initial feedback is that they are great and easy to drive," reports Dvorak. He adds that MPI owns other hybrid vehicles that aren't part of the driver education fleet, as well as flex-fuel vans.

MPI reaches about 12 000 novice drivers each year. As a result of this initiative, the first vehicle that many of these young people drive will be a hybrid, hopefully launching them on a lifetime of fuel-efficient driving.

The Association québécoise du transport et des routes adopts the Auto\$mart kit

The Auto\$mart approach to driver instructor education received a big boost in Quebec this year, thanks to its adoption by the Quebec Safety League, a branch of the Association québécoise du transport et des routes (AQTR).

The Quebec Safety League is one of two organizations mandated by the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec for the certification of Quebec's driver education schools for passenger vehicles and motorcycles. It also has a mandate to promote road safety through training and accident prevention initiatives. The Quebec Safety League arranged Sue MacNeil, chief instructor for Auto\$mart and

member of the Road Safety Educators' Association, to deliver a workshop to a dozen of driver instructors from across the province.

These individuals are now qualified as master instructors and

will educate another 700 driver educators in Quebec on how to incorporate the Auto\$mart kit in their programs. With the new road safety program for passenger vehicles, more than 120 000 new learners will be exposed each year to fuel-efficient driving messages and techniques.

"We certainly can't reach every educator or student on our own," explains Charles Crispim, Senior Manager at Natural Resources Canada. "We are pleased to have found a professional and committed organization in Quebec to help us deliver the message."

The AQTR and its training centre Transform are part of the new road safety curriculum's development committees. The AQTR will explore ways to incorporate Auto\$mart materials into the curriculum.

For more information, contact Line Paquette of the Quebec Safety League at 514-595-9110, extension 202.



Don't be stumped by a student!

Is "hypermiling" the same as "eco-driving?" Chances are one of your students will come across a hypermiling Web site while browsing the Internet, so you should be prepared for this question to come up in the classroom.

Hypermilers can best be described as a subculture of the driving public who will go to great lengths to get the absolute maximum out of a tank of fuel. They know their vehicles intimately and regularly challenge themselves – and others – to drive from point A to point B using as little fuel as possible. Hypermilers use every possible eco-driving technique and strategy to minimize fuel consumption, and their enthusiasm is to be commended. Hypermilers not only save potentially hundreds of dollars a year in fuel costs but also make an important contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants.

However, some extreme practices promoted on the Internet are definitely **not** endorsed by hypermilers, and it's important that your students understand why. In a word, it's all about safety.

What is HYPERMILING?

These practices include turning a vehicle's engine off and coasting in neutral to save fuel. Another unsafe practice is "driving without brakes," which involves avoiding complete stops whenever possible (even at stop signs) or taking corners at unsafe speeds to avoid losing momentum. Driving dangerously close behind tractor trailers to cut down on wind resistance – known as drafting – is yet another extreme driving technique that needs to be soundly rejected.

All of these practices are dangerous, and many are illegal. Eco-driving stresses safety first. Reputable hypermilers do not condone practices that, while fuel efficient, might compromise safety.

The hidden costs of aggressive driving

Everyone is talking about the high price of fuel today, including your students. It's a good time to emphasize that aggressive driving habits – such as hard acceleration, frequent braking and speeding – can increase a vehicle's fuel consumption by up to 39 percent. But don't forget to mention the hidden costs of aggressive driving, which could end up costing even more money in the long run.

Aggressive driving means more wear and tear on brakes. In fact, studies show that brake pads have to be replaced twice as often on a vehicle that is driven aggressively compared with one driven cautiously.

Tire durability and life are reduced by the excessive heat build-up that can result from aggressive driving. Tread-life declines rapidly with increases in speed: tires wear out 35 percent faster at a speed of 110 km/h compared with 80km/h.

Aggressive driving can also be hard on the catalytic converter, engine and other mechanical components. And of course it can result in collisions – minor and major – that will result in big repair bills.

While these costs may not be as visible as high fuel prices, they are real and will add up over time. The good news is that the hidden costs of aggressive driving can be avoided by following the safe, fuel-efficient practices promoted in the Auto\$mart Driver Education Kit.



Pollution Probe primer aims to inform about fuel efficiency

Have you ever wondered whether a document exists that explains in everyday English how vehicles use fuel, why they produce emissions and what governments, the auto industry and others are doing about the problem?

If the answer is “yes,” then you'll want to keep an eye on Pollution Probe's Web site for the new *Automobile Fuel Efficiency and Emissions Primer*.

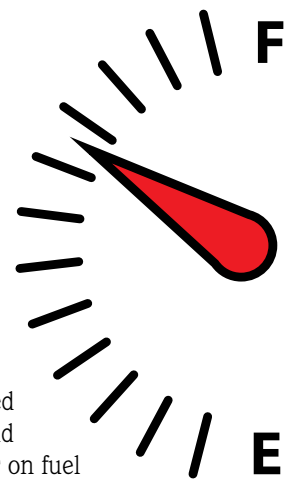
“The primer is designed to take the reader from zero knowledge to a level of knowledge that allows them to be engaged in a short period,” says Bob Oliver, Executive Director of Pollution Probe.

Students are concerned about the environment and want to know how their personal actions can make a difference. The primer will contain current information that can help you answer students' questions, lead informed and stimulating classroom discussions and reinforce the training you already deliver on fuel efficiency.

The primer will include a basic description of vehicle technology (e.g. how a car engine works and why it produces emissions), how and why exhaust emissions are harmful to the environment and human health, and what individual Canadians can do about it. It will also provide details on “what is going on behind the scenes” – the measures taken by governments and automakers to improve vehicle fuel efficiency and reduce emissions.

The *Automobile Fuel Efficiency and Emissions Primer* should be posted on Pollution Probe's Web site (www.pollutionprobe.org) by the end of 2009.

For more information, contact Bob Oliver at boliver@pollutionprobe.org.



Remembering Sue MacNeil

Canada's driver education community "lost a leading light" on December 16, 2008, with the passing of Sue MacNeil after a courageous battle with cancer. MacNeil was immediately remembered by the Road Safety Educators' Association, of which she was a director and past-president, as "a great friend, an inspiring, knowledgeable teacher, a research analyst who could make the scientific data understandable and a mentor to many."

MacNeil was widely known and deeply respected, in Canada and abroad. "She was a pioneer in many ways, from being one of the first female driver educators in Ontario to embracing the shift to the cognitive model of road safety," remembers John Svensson, President of the Driving School Association of Ontario.

MacNeil's commitment to road safety, injury prevention and professionalization of the industry was unparalleled. "This was literally a mission for her," says Svensson. "When she became involved in road safety, it was a total commitment. We've lost a leading light."

Larry Lonero, a principal of Northport Associates, recalls, "Sue was very knowledgeable about the technical research information and about the practical, operational side of things. She was probably the person best able to bridge those two worlds. She was smart and knowledgeable and cared a great deal about the work she was doing. Sue had difficulty accepting that things were not as good as they could possibly be."

At NRCan, MacNeil is remembered for the pivotal role she played in developing the new version of the Auto\$mart Student Driving Kit launched in 2005. She also personally trained dozens of driving instructors across Canada on how to use the new Auto\$mart materials in their programs.

"Natural Resources Canada will forever be indebted to Sue's tireless efforts to promote Auto\$mart and the overall importance of fuel efficiency," says Matt Rankin, Manager of NRCan's ecoENERGY for Personal Vehicles program. "Sue leaves behind many personal and work-related legacies, and the success of Auto\$mart is one of them."

Svensson concurs. "The difference in the Auto\$mart Program today – the changes that were made when the new version was launched – were largely the result of Sue's initiative. She was integral in everything, from the development of the criteria for evaluating the program to taking it across the country and even doing workshops south of the border."

Louise MacDonald, owner of the Abegweit Driving School Ltd. in Prince Edward Island, credits MacNeil with re-energizing the driver education industry.

"If it wasn't for Sue MacNeil, I would not still be in this business," she says. "I was growing tired of just seeing my students pass the course, but when I met Sue in the early 1990s, her commitment to fuel efficiency and safe driving inspired me to keep going. Her work with NRCan to link fuel efficiency and safe driving – who else could have done that? It took her brilliant mind to bring that together and to bring together the industry and government.

"Sue's passing has left a huge hole in the industry," adds MacDonald. "I don't think one person can fill it – I think it will take 50 people to fill it."

More information about MacNeil's many contributions to driver education in Canada is available at rsea.ncf.ca.





Tell us your stories

Do you have any interesting stories to share about fuel efficiency? Maybe some tips on how you teach the subject in the classroom or on the road? Send them to us at autosmart@nrcan.gc.ca, and we'll publish a selection of the best (together with the name of the educator and driving school) in the next edition of *Auto\$mart D.E.N.*

Auto\$mart DVD now available

The Auto\$mart video series, previously distributed only in VHS format, is now available on DVD. A complementary copy is included with this edition of *Auto\$mart D.E.N.*



Natural Resources Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency
Leading Canadians to Energy Efficiency at Home, at Work and on the Road

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