



ROAD SAFETY IN CANADA

Improving Your Safety



Transport
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ROAD SAFETY IN CANADA

If you are a road user, this booklet is for you. It will help you be a safer driver, rider, and pedestrian.

HOW?

It explains the greatest risks and suggests solutions.

OUR VISION:

Toward Zero Fatalities and having the safest roads in the world.



THIS BOOKLET CELEBRATES THREE MAJOR ROAD SAFETY EVENTS IN 2020

1. THE MIDPOINT OF CANADA'S ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY 2025

The vision of Road Safety Strategy 2025 is Towards Zero-The safest roads in the world and its slogan is *Rethink Road Safety*.

You can find the Strategy 2025 at: <http://roadsafetystategy.ca/en/>



Road Safety Strategy 2025 is Canada's fourth national road safety program. The first three contributed to the reduction of the number of deaths and serious injuries resulting from road collisions in Canada by 44% and 56% respectively between 1996 and 2015.

Canada is a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In 2018, Canada ranked 12th among 22 reporting OECD countries in the rate of road deaths.¹

¹ Based on deaths per billion vehicle kilometres travelled in 2017.

2. THE SECOND UNITED NATIONS' DECADE OF ACTION FOR ROAD SAFETY

Did you know that approximately 1.3 million people worldwide die in road collisions every year and an estimated 50 million more are injured?

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly passed a resolution in September 2020 to establish the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030. The goal is to reduce the forecast level of road traffic deaths and injuries around the world which are expected to increase if nothing is done.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is leading this effort because the UN sees the global epidemic in road trauma as a public health issue:

- Crash victims require expensive medical treatment and rehabilitation
- The UN estimates that 1 in 10 of the world's hospital beds is occupied by a crash victim
- Treating crash victims can delay scheduled surgeries and add to longer waiting lists

The 2020 road safety annual report released by the International Traffic Safety Data and Analysis Group (IRTAD) of the International Transport Forum (ITF) indicated that the number of road deaths decreased in most 34 IRTAD member countries with validated data and that the overall number of road deaths decreased by 6.9% in 2018 compared to 2010.²



To learn more, about the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety, go to: <https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/safety-and-mobility/decade-of-action-for-road-safety-2021-2030>

3. 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ROAD SAFETY AT TRANSPORT CANADA

Transport Canada has worked and continues to work with its provincial and territorial partners as well as those in the manufacturing and non-governmental sectors to improve the safety of road travel in Canada. Between 2011 and 2020, fatalities have dropped by 14% and serious injuries by 28%.³

² International Traffic Safety Data and Analysis Group (IRTAD) of the International Transport Forum (ITF) (2020). 2020 Road Safety Annual Report.

³ Transport Canada (2022). Road Safety in Canada 2020.



OCCUPANT PROTECTION

In 2017, 97% of front seat occupants were wearing seat belts but, in 2020, 35% of fatally injured occupants were unbelted.⁴

DRIVERS AND PASSENGERS

- Always wear your seat belt
- Sit at least 25 cm (10 in) away from the air bag
- Adjust head restraints so that the top is even with the top of your ears

CHILDREN

- Sit infants and children under 13 in the back seat
- Use approved child car seats/booster seats that have not expired. An approved child car seat in Canada will have a National Safety Mark
- Never use child car seats/booster seats that have been recalled
- Replace child car seats/booster seats that have been involved in collisions
- Install child car seats/booster seats properly
- Fasten child in the car seat/booster seat properly
- Never leave a child in a hot vehicle as they could die in minutes: [Dangers of Hot Cars and Children](#)

⁴ Transport Canada (2022). Road Safety in Canada 2020.

DID YOU KNOW?

Adults: Wearing seat belts correctly can reduce the chances of death in a collision by 47% and serious injury by 52%.⁵

Children: Proper use of child car seats appropriate for height and weight can reduce the chances of death in a collision by 71% and injury by 67%.⁶



To learn more about child restraints, please go to:

<https://www.tc.gc.ca/en/services/road/child-car-seat-safety/choosing-child-car-seat-booster-seat.html>

⁵ Statistics taken from Stewart, D.E., Arora, H.R. and Dalmotas, D. (1997). Estimation Methodologies for assessing Effectiveness of Seat Belt Restraint Systems and the National Occupant Restraint Program. Transport Canada, Ottawa, Canada, Publication No. TP 13110E.

⁶ Isaksson-Hellman I, L. Jakobsson, C. Gustafsson, H. Norin. Trends and Effects of Child Restraint Systems Based on Volvo's Swedish Accident Database; Society of Automotive Engineers 973299, pp. 42-54.



IMPAIRED DRIVING

IN 2016:

- Approximately a third of drivers killed had been drinking some amount of alcohol before the collision, a reduction of 15% compared to 1996.⁷
- Approximately half of drivers killed had some impairing drugs other than alcohol in their systems, an increase of 15% compared to 2008 and approximately 21% of drivers killed had been using cannabis, an increase of 17% compared to 2008.⁷
- Roadside surveys conducted in five jurisdictions during 2017 and 2018 found that about 4% of drivers had been drinking and 10% had been using drugs.⁸

- Never drive during or after drinking alcohol
- Never drive during or after using impairing drugs or impairing medication
- Refuse to travel with impaired drivers – take a taxi, public transit, or ride sharing
- Don't let your friends or family drive after drinking
- Phone 911 and report a driver who seems impaired
- Ask your doctor if a prescribed drug could impair your driving
- Ask your pharmacist if an over-the-counter drug could impair your driving



To learn more, visit: <https://madd.ca/pages/impaired-driving/overview/the-human-cost-of-impaired-driving/> or <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/policing/police/community-safety-policing/impaired-driving.html>

⁷ Traffic Injury Research Foundation (2019). The Alcohol and Drug-Crash Problems in Canada: 2016.

⁸ Beirness, D. J. (2019). A Compilation of Jurisdictional Roadside Surveys Conducted Prior to Cannabis Legalization. Report prepared for Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators.



DRIVER FATIGUE

Fatigue is part of our daily lives. Scientific studies reveal that driver fatigue is a significant road safety issue. Although it is difficult to clearly estimate, the international consensus is that fatigue would contribute to 15 to 20% of road collisions.⁹

WARNING SIGNS OF FATIGUE INCLUDE:

- eyes blinking slowly, staring at the road with fixed glances, closing your eyes for a moment
- yawning more often, moving about in your seat, rubbing your face
- slowing down without meaning to
- braking too late
- difficulty tracking, drifting in your lane towards the centre line or shoulder
- not being able to remember driving the last few kilometres

TO STAY ALERT WHILE DRIVING:

- Get a good night's sleep (ideally 8 hours) before setting out on a long road trip
- Try to avoid driving at night
- Make rest stops every 90 minutes and walk around if possible
- Share the driving with others, if possible
- Stop driving and take a nap for at least 20 minutes if you feel tired



To learn more: <https://tirf.ca/>

⁹ Akerstedt, T., Arendt, J., Cassel, W., Dinges, D., Englund, L., Findley, L., Folkard, S., George, C., Gillberg, M., Guilleminault, C., Hack, M., Haraldsson, P.-O., Hartley, L., Hetta, J., Horne, J., Kecklund, G., Krieger, J., Landstrom, U., Nicholson, A., Pack, A., Parkes, D., Partinen, M., Philip, P., Reyner, L., Rosekind, M., Samel, A., Spencer, M., & Zulley, J. (2000). Consensus Statement: Fatigue and accidents in transport operations. *Journal of Sleep Research*, 9, 395.



DRIVER DISTRACTION

In 2020, 21% of road deaths involved driver distraction, the same as in 2011. Distraction was more common among drivers under 20 (20%) and those 65 and older (25%).¹⁰

Observational surveys indicated that drivers talking on phones increased from 2.3% in 2012–13 to 2.9% in 2016–17, an increase of 26% and texting increased from 1.6% to 2.2%, a 38% increase.¹⁰

TO AVOID DISTRACTIONS:

- Focus on driving and what is around you
- Don't eat, drink, use your phone, adjust your radio/GPS coordinates or groom yourself while driving
- Don't pick up items that have fallen to the ground while driving
- Don't text while driving. Texting drivers increase their risk of collisions by 23%¹¹
- Don't use a cell phone or other device while driving – even if they are hands-free. Drivers using a cell phone are up to four times more likely to be involved in a serious collision¹²
- Put your phone in the glove box/back of the car while driving to avoid the temptation



For more information about distracted driving, you can go to:

<https://tc.canada.ca/en/road-transportation/stay-safe-when-driving/distracted-driving>

You can pledge to leave the phone alone while driving by visiting: <http://www.leavethephonealone.ca/en/>

¹⁰ Transport Canada (2022). Road Safety in Canada 2020.

¹¹ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2010). Statistics and Facts about Distracted Driving.

¹² Redelmeier, D., Tibshirani, R., (1997). Association between cellular-telephone calls and motor vehicle collisions. *The New England Journal of Medicine* 336 (7): 453–458.



AGGRESSIVE DRIVING AND SPEEDING

2020 statistics indicate that 25% of road deaths involved speeding, 10% involved a failure to yield, and 7% involved failing to obey a traffic control device as contributing factors.¹³

- Don't speed
- Reduce your speed at night and in bad weather
- Slow down in school and work zones
- On the highway, stay at least four car lengths behind the vehicle in front of you
- Never run amber/red lights
- Give pedestrians the right of way at intersections and pedestrian crossings
- Don't overtake aggressively or weave through traffic
- Keep a safe distance from cyclists and pedestrians, ideally 1.5 metres

Did you know that many intersections have cameras to detect drivers running red lights?¹⁴



For more information, see: https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/43915/9782940395040_eng.pdf;jsessionid=210906EF0D9A95B50C22813DF6D5F022?sequence=1

¹³ Transport Canada (2022). Road Safety in Canada 2020.

¹⁴ Council of Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety. Safety Measures for Cyclists and Pedestrians around Heavy Vehicles: Summary Report, pp. 22.



POORLY EQUIPPED VEHICLES

- Choose/drive a vehicle with:
 - a high safety rating
 - front and side air bags
 - good visibility and limited blind spots
 - lane departure warnings
 - automatic emergency braking (AEB)
- Put four matching snow tires on your vehicle in the winter
- Check your tire pressure every month
- Take your vehicle to your dealer as soon as possible if you receive a recall notice from the manufacturer



To learn more about safety technology in vehicles, please visit: <https://www.tc.gc.ca/en/services/road/driver-assistance-technologies.html>



YOUNG DRIVERS

Too many young drivers die on Canada's roads:

- In 2020, 40% of the fatalities involving drivers aged 16 to 24 were the young drivers themselves¹⁵
- Young drivers' rate of being involved in a fatal collision per 100,000 licensed drivers was highest among all age groups¹⁵

This is why all Canadian provinces and territories have introduced graduated driver licensing programs for all new drivers. These programs place restrictions on novice drivers. Such restrictions can include: (please refer to your provincial rules for more specific information)

- having to drive with an experienced supervisor
- no drinking or drugs during or before driving
- not allowing late night driving
- not allowing young passengers
- not allowing expressway driving



To learn more, see <https://tirf.ca/projects/new-gdl-framework-planning-future/>

¹⁵ Transport Canada (2022). Road Safety in Canada 2020.



MOTORCYCLISTS

In 2020, only 3% of registered vehicles were motorcycles but 11% of Canada's road user fatalities were motorcyclists.¹⁶

IMPROVE YOUR PROTECTION

- Always wear an approved helmet while riding
- Always wear clothing that will:
 - protect you from the weather and protect you in a fall e.g., boots, gloves, and suits designed to protect your shoulders, elbows, knees, hips, and back

INCREASE YOUR VISIBILITY TO OTHERS

- Wear light coloured or reflective clothing
- Keep in mind other drivers may not see you

IMPAIRED RIDING

- Don't ride after drinking or using impairing drugs
- Ask your doctor if a prescribed drug could impair your riding or ask your pharmacist if an over-the-counter drug could impair your riding

AGGRESSIVE RIDING AND SPEEDING

- Don't speed
- Don't overtake aggressively or weave through traffic
- Reduce your speed at night and in bad weather
- Don't use cell phones or smart phones while riding
- Never run amber/red lights



For more information, see:

[BC RCMP – Motorcycle Safety Tips \(rcmp-grc.gc.ca\)](https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/motorcycle-safety-tips)

¹⁶ Transport Canada (2022). Road Safety in Canada 2020.



BICYCLISTS

Bicycling can be an efficient, healthy, and fun way to get around, but it pays to be safe. In 2020, 2% of fatalities were bicyclists.¹⁷

IMPROVE YOUR PROTECTION

- Always wear an approved helmet while riding
- Wear clothing that will:
 - protect you from the weather
 - protect you in a fall and
 - avoid wearing high heel shoes, sandals, and other loosely fitting shoes

INCREASE YOUR VISIBILITY TO OTHERS

- Wear light coloured or reflective clothing
- Keep in mind that drivers may not see you
- If riding at night, make sure your bike has lights on the front and back
- Be alert at intersections for turning vehicles

AGGRESSIVE RIDING

- Don't weave in and out of traffic
- Obey all traffic signs and signals; bicycles are vehicles
- Don't ride between the curb and heavy vehicles as they have large blind spots and may not be able to see you
- Be mindful riding next to parked cars
- Don't use cell phones or smart phones while riding



To learn more about bicycling, please visit:
[Cycling – CAA National](#)

¹⁷ Transport Canada (2022). Road Safety in Canada 2020.



PEDESTRIANS

Pedestrians represented 17% of motor vehicle collision deaths in 2020.¹⁸ That's why it is so important to be a careful pedestrian.

IMPROVE YOUR VISIBILITY

- Make eye contact with drivers if you are going to cross in front of them at an intersection
- Wear light or reflective clothing at night
- Walk facing oncoming traffic if there are no sidewalks

POOR JUDGEMENT

- Never cross an intersection against a red light
- Don't use cell phones or smart phones when crossing streets
- Teach your young children how to walk safely near traffic



To learn more, please visit: [Pedestrian safety | ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/safety/pedestrian)

¹⁸ Transport Canada (2022). Road Safety in Canada 2020.



HEAVY COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

In 2020, 18% of fatalities involved heavy commercial vehicles but 85% of the fatalities were occupants of other vehicles, pedestrians, or bicyclists.¹⁹

WHEN YOU ARE AROUND THESE VEHICLES:

- Don't cut in too closely in front of them as large vehicles are unable to slow down as fast as cars
- Make eye contact with drivers of these vehicles if you are going to cross in front of them at an intersection
- If the vehicle is turning right, don't stand too close to the curb because you may be hidden in a blind spot
- If you are bicycling, don't ride between the curb and these vehicles



For more information, see: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/official-mto-drivers-handbook/sharing-road-other-road-users> or <https://comt.ca/reports/safetymeasures.pdf>

¹⁹ Transport Canada (2022). Road Safety in Canada 2020.



WINTER DRIVING



Visit our Winter Driving website

<https://tc.canada.ca/en/road-transportation/stay-safe-when-driving/winter-driving> and learn some useful safety tips for:

- driving on wet or icy roads
- winter tires
- air pressures
- what to include in a well-stocked emergency kit to handle any emergency



Visit our Road Safety in Canada website

<https://www.tc.gc.ca/en/services/road.html> and learn about:

- road collision statistics
- safer vehicle technologies
- car seat safety
- driver distraction

MAKE EVERY YEAR A SAFE YEAR ON THE ROAD:

- Wear your seatbelt
- Don't drink and drive
- Don't drive after using drugs
- Obey the rules of the road
- Focus on your driving and avoid distractions
- Don't speed
- Don't text and drive

CONTACT US BY CALLING: 1-800-333-0371