

# Safety Canada

THE MEMBER NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADA SAFETY COUNCIL

## ATVs: Ride your way to safety

With spring in the air, many people are hitting the trails on their all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). Getting out on your ATV and enjoying the nice weather is a great recreational activity, but there are also hazards that accompany this pastime.

ATVs are especially dangerous when used by children and young teens because they lack the knowledge, physical size, strength, and cognitive and motor skills to operate them safely.

Males are involved in 75 to 85 per cent of ATV crashes leading to injury, according to a 2009 Canadian Pediatric Society report. Children less than 16 years of age account for almost one third of ATV injury related emergency department visits, and 30 per cent or more of ATV injuries result in hospitalizations. Almost half of all deaths occur in children 16 years of age or younger.

Most provinces require ATV riders to wear helmets and have restrictions for

young riders. Some require, for instance, that an adult supervise riders less than 14 years of age. In Alberta and British Columbia there is currently no provincial law that regulates helmet use, but certain jurisdictions require a rider to wear one. There is also no current legislation that mandates users to take an ATV safety training course, except for in Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Michel Prud'homme, chief instructor and manager of traffic safety and training at Canada Safety Council, believes that training and testing for ATV operators should be mandatory. "I don't know what's taking so long," he says. "With all the injuries and deaths that have occurred throughout the country you'd think the government would do something about it, but there's still no legislation."

Dr. Andrew McCallum, Chief Coroner of Ontario, said all ATV riders should complete a rider safety course in

their area or through the Canada Safety Council, and parents, children, and teens should be aware of the risk of injury or death when riding an ATV especially in the absence of adult supervision. "These are preventable deaths," Dr. McCallum concluded. He also recommends increased public education regarding the safe operation of ATVs, and permission to ride an ATV on approved trails only from age 12 to 16.

The biggest problem with ATV regulation may actually be their size. ATVs are always getting bigger and more powerful and young people are riding machines they're not big enough for and cannot control. "Full size ATVs are large heavy and powerful machines that require strength, balance, dexterity, and judgment, which children have not yet developed," explains Dr. McCallum.

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## President's Perspective

As the school year begins to wind down, field trips become more common. Proper safety procedures are of utmost importance on these school outings. When groups travel off-site or participate in outdoor pursuits, there is an undeniable risk of injury or incident.

The Canada Safety Council has a longstanding concern that schools and parents must work together to manage risk on school trips. A lapse in risk management can usually be identified when an outing ends in serious injury. Perhaps risks were not assessed properly at the planning stage, or safety rules were not enforced during the event itself. Good risk management practices can aid in preventing serious mishaps.

Well-planned field trips serve as an opportunity to teach skills and safety awareness, when organizers stress possible risks and necessary precautions. They prepare young people to enjoy outdoor activities safely when they are outside the controls of an organized group.

In many cases, hazards can be reduced or removed by following safety standards or guidelines. These can be internal policies and procedures, or can originate from external organizations such as athletic associations, other school boards, or regulating authorities. For instance, they may require precautions such as the use of proper safety equipment, or they may require organizers and operators to train and supervise the participants.

School boards need to have a formal risk assessment process for field trips and outdoor education. Boards should study the location thoroughly, have someone who knows the area on every trip, and be prepared for a worst-case scenario. Parents have a right to assurance that all necessary precautions have been taken.

While we have found school boards to have field trip safety procedure documentation in place, they seem to fall short in communicating these plans with teachers, students, and volunteer parents. Communication is key when it comes to understanding the policies and procedures to be followed on school outings. Without an understanding or knowledge of the safety guidelines, there is no way that one can enforce these safety measures.

Furthermore, roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined when off school property. Each adult or responsible student needs to be in charge of a specific task or duty. When too many people are in charge of one thing, each person may not take their task seriously and depend on the others to be in charge. Having only one individual in charge of one specific responsibility, it is less likely that something will fall through the cracks.

Schools need to provide training and ensure everyone works together seamlessly to create a safe environment for all participants.

***Safety, It's an Attitude***



Jack Smith, President





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"Children are at risk of riding too fast or riding onto uneven ground, losing control of the machine, and being thrown from the vehicle or crushed in a rollover."

It doesn't take much of a spill to be seriously hurt while riding an ATV, and dozens of people die every year in Canada doing just that. Yet despite the coroner's recommendation that anyone 12 and older riding an ATV should take an approved course, no such legislation exists in many provinces in Canada.

"Knowing how a machine operates, what the engineering is behind each machine, and what the rules and regulations are provincially and

municipally will lead to a (much safer ride)," says Dave Horner, an ATV instructor with the Canada Safety Council.

Here are some safety tips that all ATV owners and operators should follow:

- Always wear an approved safety helmet when operating an ATV.
- Take an approved ATV Safe Riders Course before operating your ATV.
- Always read your owner's manual before operating your ATV and follow safe operating procedures.
- Do not consume alcohol or drugs while operating an ATV.
- Do not operate an ATV at excessive

speeds. Ride at a speed that is proper for the terrain visibility conditions and your experience.

- Wear appropriate protective clothing while operating your ATV.

The Canada Safety Council recommends for all ATV owners and operators to take a rider safety training course, regardless of whether it is mandatory in your home province.

The CSC's ATV Rider Course is a hands-on training program led by certified instructors. It offers an enjoyable and structured approach to proper ATV operation. For more information, contact Michel Prud'homme at (613) 739-1535, ext. 233.



## WHEELS IN MOTION

# Early Months of Driving are Riskiest for Teens

Crashes and near-crashes are more common in the first six months of independent driving than in the following year, a new study that observed teenage drivers through the use of cameras and other sensors has found. Previous research has shown that teen crash rates decline quickly as young drivers gain experience (see *Status Report*, Feb. 17, 2001; on the web at [iihs.org](http://iihs.org)), but the study by the National Institutes of Health and the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute is the first to use in-vehicle monitoring to confirm that trend.

In the study, vehicles driven by 42 newly licensed 16 year-olds were equipped with cameras, sensors, and computers. For each trip, the devices collected information on passengers, crashes, and near-crashes. Data also were gathered when parents drove the vehicles.

A total of 40 crashes and 279 near-crashes by all drivers were recorded during the 18-month study period. Teens' rates of both crashes and near-crashes per distance driven were higher during the first six months than the prior year. The teenagers had 13.3 crashes or near-crashes per 16,000 kilometres in the first period and 8.5 in the second. As expected, the teen crash and near-crash rates were much higher than those of their parents. The teen rate averaged about 10 per 16,000 kilometres during the entire 18 months, while the parent rate was about two.

In a separate analysis of data from the same study, researchers looked at different variables such as the presence of adult or teen passengers to see how they affected the young drivers' crash and near-crash rates. In addition to crashes and near-crashes, the researchers also measured risky driving, including things like rapid acceleration, hard braking, and hard turns.

Not surprisingly, teens drove better when they were with their parents. In the presence of adults, the rate of crashes and near-crashes was 75 per cent lower, and risky driving fell 67 per cent compared with teens driving alone. When other teenagers were in the car, the crash/near-crash rate did not vary, and risky driving was 18 per cent less frequent than when the teenagers drove alone. Those results were surprising because fatal crashes are known to be more likely when there are teenage passengers riding along.

The researchers also looked at how rates of risky driving among teens changed over time. They found these rates were nearly five times as high as those of their parents and didn't decline as the teenagers gained more experience at the wheel.

**Source:** *Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Status Report Vol. 46, No. 11*





## SPORTS AND LEISURE

## Get in the (golf) game with arthritis

With spring on the horizon, many golf-starved Canadians will soon be making a beeline to the fairways. If you have arthritis, golf is an ideal activity. Walking between holes mobilizes joints and strengthens leg muscles without putting undue stress on knees and hips. Playing golf keeps your hips and shoulders mobile, maintains hand strength and even improves balance and coordination. But repetitive bending, twisting and swinging also puts pressure on your back, shoulders and wrists, so it's important to take a few precautions to protect yourself from injury.

The Arthritis Society offers the following tips:

- Consult a pro. To minimize strain on muscles and joints, take a lesson or two to learn proper form. Even experienced golfers can pick up pointers.
- Condition your muscles. Exercise can reverse the age-related decline in flexibility, particularly in the back and shoulders, which predisposes people to injury. A physiotherapist can help you devise a suitable strengthening program.
- Warm up. Before hitting the links, ease the stiffness in your joints

and muscles with a warm shower or heating pad. To minimize post-game discomfort, take your medication before heading to the course.

- Loosen up. Before a game, walk for a few minutes, do 10 to 15 minutes of gentle stretches and then take 10 to 15 shots on the practice range.
- Get good gear. Perimeter-weighted heads, lightweight graphite shafts and shock-absorbing gloves reduce the jolt to your joints. The same goes for low-compression balls. To lessen stress on your finger joints, you should build up club grips with epoxy tape.
- Don't toss tees. Use tees even during practice, so you won't accidentally whack the ground and jar your joints.
- Push, don't pull. Push your cart (using both hands), rather than pulling it.
- Modify your putt. Learn to putt in an upright position; a longer putter may help.
- Put pain on ice. After your game, remember to apply ice or a cold pack to painful, swollen joints.

**More information on living with arthritis is available online at [www.arthritis.ca](http://www.arthritis.ca).**



## WHEELS IN MOTION

## Green Defensive Driving Course: Online

Canada Safety Council and Stantec Learning Products and Solutions are proud to introduce the newly updated online Green Defensive Driving Course.

The updated version of the course presents an excellent opportunity to train new employees and offer existing employees refresher training. The Green Defensive Driving online course aims to help participants become safer drivers, and will take approximately three hours to complete.

This course, modelled after the Canada Safety Council Defensive Driving Course, provides an opportunity to learn:

- What is involved in driving defensively.
- Why and how various types of motor vehicle collisions occur.
- What it takes to prevent collisions.
- How to reduce the environmental impact of driving.

The course is comprised of six mandatory modules and a final test:

**Module 1:** Principles and Foundations

**Module 2:** The Driver

**Module 3:** Intersections

**Module 4:** Passing

**Module 5:** The Vehicle

**Module 6:** Winter Driving

Within the course, you will find:

- Interactive learning activities including collision scenes, driving techniques, and driving scenarios.
- Audio narrative throughout.
- Review quizzes at the end of each module.
- A final test with 30 multiple choice questions.

For more information, or to register for the online course, go to [www.solutions.ca/gddc-cep](http://www.solutions.ca/gddc-cep) or e-mail [LearningSolutions@stantec.com](mailto:LearningSolutions@stantec.com).

**Please note:** This course can be customized to meet the training needs of your organization.

## HOME SAFE HOME

# Grubs, bugs and slugs: how to combat a gardener's worst enemies

Many people begin to think about the upcoming lawn care season before the snow has fully melted. Achieving a blanket of beautiful, green grass can be difficult, especially with saboteurs like grubs and other lawn pests around.

Most of us have some of these pests living on our lawns year-round, but they only become a problem when conditions ripen for an infestation. You can prevent infestations from happening by following a few simple steps:

- Look at the problem as a whole and focus on prevention. Look at all available information and consider your options before deciding how to proceed;
- Check your lawn regularly. Early inspection leads to early intervention and elimination;
- Identify the pests and read up on them. Sometimes beneficial insects are mistaken for pesky ones, and;
- Once you've identified the pest, check for damage and then take action.

This action could include the use of pest control products to repel, control or eliminate the pest. Though Health Canada has registered many pesticides for use in Canada, some provinces and municipalities have placed additional restrictions on pesticide use on public and

private property. Check for restrictions with your local authorities before you use a registered pesticide on your lawn.

Some of the worst enemies of a healthy lawn include:

- **White grubs:** the larvae of beetles, grubs are the scourge of gardeners. White or yellowish, they have wrinkled, c-shaped bodies with brownish heads and six legs. They eat grass roots; as they eat, the grass will turn brown and die.
- **Hairy chinch bugs:** black with white wings and two tiny black spots visible on their back, these bugs boast piercing, sucking mouths that they use to feed on the sap of grass plants.
- **Slugs and snails:** 2 to 4 cm long with one or two pairs of tentacles, these molluscs can cause major damage in your garden. Able to eat nearly 40 per cent of their weight, they attack seedlings, roots, tubers and young plants, leaving large jagged holes and sticky deposits, mainly on the leaves of herbs and garden vegetables.

For help in identifying and treating lawn problems, Health Canada's Pest Management Regulatory Agency has produced some very thorough *Pest Notes* with photos and how-to information at [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/pmra](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/pmra).

[www.newscanada.com](http://www.newscanada.com)

## CHILD SAFETY

## Medication Safety

The home can be a dangerous place for little explorers. In fact, almost all childhood poisonings occur in the home. The main sources of these poisonings are medicine. This includes prescription drugs, vitamins, supplements, herbal products, and cold remedies. Parents and caregivers can prevent childhood poisonings by making sure medicines are stored and disposed of properly.

### Store Safely

- Always keep medicines in their original packaging. This not only prevents confusion, but also keeps the emergency information close by.
- Keep medicines in a locked and secure place that is out of children's reach.

- Follow the medicine's instructions for storage. Only refrigerate medication if the directions tell you to do so. Do not keep in the bathroom, as heat and moisture can cause spoiling.

### Dispose Safely

- Old or unused medication should be disposed of every year.
- Never throw unused or expired medicine in the garbage or flush down the toilet. Remember medicine is a hazard.
- Unused or old medication should be returned to your nearby pharmacy or household hazardous waste depot for safe disposal.

[www.ontariopoisoncentre.com](http://www.ontariopoisoncentre.com)

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

# Railway Crossings

*Come aboard the Operation Lifesaver train and take a moment to complete the following quiz. Remember to use your common sense, because failure to do so could be fatal!*

### Questions

- The Advance Warning Sign tells you:**
  - There is a railway yard nearby.
  - To slow down, you are approaching a railway crossing.
  - There is only one railway track ahead.
- Trains sound the engine whistle at most highway/railway crossings as a safety warning. When you are approaching a crossing and hear an engine whistle, you must:**
  - Be prepared to stop.
  - If a train is approaching, stop at least five metres from the nearest rail.
  - Ensure all tracks are clear before proceeding.
  - All of the above.
- Most highway/railway crossing collisions involve drivers living within \_\_\_\_\_ of the location of the collision.**
  - 10 km
  - 40 km
  - 65 km
  - 100 km
- A freight train with 80 railcars travelling 100 km/h can take \_\_\_\_\_ to stop.**
  - Less than 500 metres
  - 1 km
  - Up to 2 km
  - More than 2 km
- Some vehicles stop at all crossings. These may include:**
  - Public transit and motor coach vehicles carrying paying passengers.
  - School buses.
  - Hazardous material carriers.
  - All of the above.
- The main contributing factor of a train-vehicle collision is:**
  - Weather conditions
  - Malfunctioning warning devices
  - Poor eyesight
  - Vehicle driver error
- It is illegal to drive around crossing gates.**

True      False
- Never race a train to the crossing.**

True      False
- It is okay for you to cross when the last car of a train clears the crossing.**

True      False
- Avoid stopping on the tracks in a traffic jam.**

True      False
- If you stall on the tracks when a train is approaching, get away from your vehicle immediately.**

True      False

*Source: Operation Lifesaver*

- The advance warning sign warns you in advance of the highway/railway crossing. You should slow down and be alert as you are approaching a crossing.
- The locomotive engineer is required, by law, to sound the train whistle when approaching most crossings. When you hear it, be prepared to stop. If a train is approaching, stop at least five metres from the nearest rail and ensure all tracks are clear before proceeding.
- 40 km. As you might expect, familiarity with highway/railway crossings breeds complacency. Many collisions occur close to home.
- Even in an emergency, a train travelling at 100 km/h could take up to two kilometres to come to a stop. Remember, locomotives and railcars are a lot heavier than the family vehicle, and it takes a greater distance to stop. You can stop much more quickly!
- In some provinces, public transit and motor coach vehicles carrying paying passengers, school buses and hazardous material carriers may stop at all crossings. So be prepared to stop if you are following one of these types of vehicles.
- According to studies, vehicle drivers who do not exercise due caution at crossings are the main reason for highway/railway crossing collisions. These drivers, who fail to obey the warning signs and/or signals, take dangerous risks with their lives and those of others.
- True. It is not only illegal, but also dangerous to drive around gates.
- The race for the crossing was a highlight of many an old movie comedy; in real life, there is nothing funny about such a scene — it can be deadly, because even in a tie, you lose!
- False. Do not proceed until you are sure that all tracks are clear and that all applicable automated warning devices have ceased operation — you might walk or drive right into the path or side of a moving train on the same or other track.
- True. Before proceeding across the tracks, be sure there's enough space for your vehicle on the other side. If it doesn't fit, don't commit!
- True. If your vehicle stalls on a crossing, get all the occupants out of the vehicle and away from the track immediately. Do not run! Walk quickly to a point at least 30 metres away from the track. This will prevent you from being struck by flying debris if the train hits the stalled vehicle.

**Answers**

**CHILD SAFETY****Playing it Safe at the Playground!**

Playgrounds and backyard swing sets provide fun, fresh air, and exercise. But they also can pose some safety hazards. While outdoors this summer, stay safe while following these simple tips from Elmer the Safety Elephant.

- Avoid wearing hooded sweat-shirts or other clothing with long strings that could get tangled and become a choking hazard.
- If you rode your bicycle or rollerblades to the park, remember to take off your helmet, so the straps won't get caught in anything.
- Be careful of metal slides. The sun can make them very hot.
- Don't go barefoot. Always wear your shoes. If you go barefoot, you could get a splinter or a cut.
- Play only on dry equipment. If it is wet, you could slip and fall.
- Go down the slide one at a time. Wait until the person in front of you is on the ground and has moved away from the slide.
- Move away from the slide as soon as you reach the ground.
- Always slide sitting down and facing forward. NEVER slide down headfirst.
- Guardrails are there to protect you. Don't climb over them.
- Sit down when you swing.
- Swing with only one person per swing.
- Wait until the swing stops before you get off.
- Be careful when you walk in front of moving swings. Don't get too close or you could get hit accidentally.
- Climb steps slowly and hold onto the handrails.

**Safety Canada**

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ISSN: 0048-8968

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Charitable BN: 11882 8565 RR 0001