

# Safety Canada

THE MEMBER NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADA SAFETY COUNCIL

## The perils of party buses

The recent death of 16-year-old Ernest Azoadam in British Columbia highlights potential safety issues around the use and operation of party buses, especially when underage passengers are onboard and alcohol is along for the ride.

Media reports indicate Azoadam collapsed suddenly while dancing on the bus, and he died a short time later. RCMP sources are quoted in these reports as saying there is evidence alcohol and possibly drugs were being consumed onboard.

"It's a club on wheels without the proper oversight," said Raynald Marchand, general manager at the Canada Safety Council, in response to questions about safety concerns on party buses.

As thousands of teenagers are getting ready to mark their high school graduations and proms this spring, now is a crucial time for parents, guardians and educators to have honest conversations with youth about being safe and responsible while partying. Partying while on the road creates even more concerns.

This prom and grad season, the Canada Safety Council cautions against the use of party buses. These vehicles not only create environments where underage and irresponsible drinking may occur, they also endanger other road users if the driver is distracted by rowdy passengers.

Hundreds of companies and owners provide party bus service in every major city and many smaller communities across Canada. Party buses differ from limousine services in that the buses are not necessarily used for transporting people from one place to another. Rather, they are often driven around without a destination, picking up and dropping off passengers over the span of several hours. Being mobile, this can make it difficult for law enforcement to put a stop to illegal behaviour, which is very likely one of the reasons party buses are so popular.

Another significant difference: party buses often come with dance floors, which passengers are encouraged to use while the bus is on the road. Obviously, people could easily be injured if they fall while the bus is in motion. Along with that, one company boasts

"Our amazing party bus holds up to 20 passengers for your large groups and even has a dance pole for your partying excitement."

Many party bus companies talk about strictly prohibiting passengers from consuming alcohol while onboard, in compliance with provincial motor vehicle regulations. Yet, these rules are very often followed by information outlining fees charged for cleaning up spilled alcohol in the vehicles. Clearly, the owners and operators know that passengers regularly consume alcohol onboard.

The party buses industry is rife with safety concerns because of the irresponsibility of some passengers and operators, and a lack of consistent policies regarding underage riders. Some companies have clear guidelines requiring adult or parental supervision, while others lack any policies at all.

This grad and prom season, err on the side of caution and choose to celebrate responsibly. It makes for better memories if everyone gets home safely.

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# President's Perspective

## Cut the cord, keep it high

What comes to mind when you think about childproofing your home? Maybe it's installing a baby-gate at the top of the stairs or putting harmful cleaning products out of reach. Maybe it's putting plugs in the electrical outlets.

Less obvious but dangerous and deadly household hazards are looped or long cords of window covering. These cords can create strangulation hazards for young children. Health Canada reports that between 1986 and January 2013, there have been 34 deaths and 26 near-fatal incidents involving children under the age of five.

Awareness and education are crucial to preventing more tragedies. Busy parents need to be aware of the strangulation hazards window covering cords can create, and know how to act to protect their children.

One solution is to go cordless. Choose alternate window coverings such as short curtains, especially in the children's bedrooms, play areas and common areas throughout the house.

If you have window coverings with continuous looped cords, cut the cords to break the loops. This will create two separate ends. Then, when the blind is down or the drape is drawn, shorten the length of the dangling cords by cutting them.

Once the cords are shortened, make sure they stay out of reach! Move any tables, bookcases, chairs, benches or clutter away from windows that children might climb on to reach the cords. Use a large clothespin or paperclip to gather the remaining length of the cord near the top of the window covering. Or, put a hook or two nails in the wall near the top of the window covering, and wrap the remaining length of the cord around them.

Make a habit of regularly checking that cords are kept well out of children's reach. A good idea is to set a reminder in your smartphone's calendar to do this at least once a week. As well, put a sticker or label near your window to visually remind yourself to check that the cords are inaccessible to your kids.

Free retrofit window cord safety kits are available from the Window Covering Safety Council. More information is available at [www.windowcoverings.org](http://www.windowcoverings.org).

Finally, talk with other parents, family members and friends about the hidden dangers of window covering cords. Being aware of this hazard and taking steps to eliminate it just might save a child's life!

## Safety, It's an Attitude

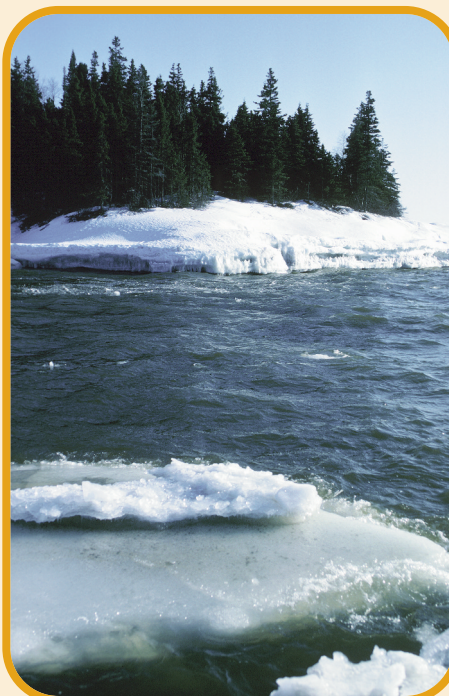


Jack Smith, President



## Some seasonal safety reminders

- Exercise due caution around lakes, river and ponds. Water levels are likely higher than usual because of spring runoff. Stay off any remaining ice, as it is very likely unstable.
- Many animals are more active during the spring than in previous months. Drive defensively by watching for animals and be prepared to stop if necessary. If you are driving before dawn or after dusk, increase your visibility by keeping your headlights on high-beam as much as possible. Keep the windshield and headlights clean too, and avoid distractions such as your cellphone so that you can focus your entire attention on the road ahead.
- Is your medicine cabinet due for a spring cleaning? Unused or old medication can be hazardous substances, and should be returned to your nearest pharmacy or household hazardous waste depot for safe disposal. Never dispose of medication by throwing it in the garbage or flushing it down the toilet.
- Eager to get a head start on BBQ season? Don't just fire-up the grill! Take time to properly maintain and clean your BBQ. If you are using a propane tank, keep it in the shade and never store propane in your home, your car or your garage. Remember that cylinder tanks must be replaced every ten years.
- Garage sales pop up this time of year as people clear the clutter from their homes. But that backyard bargain might really be a safety hazard in disguise. Second-hand toys, cribs, playpens, strollers and baby walkers might not meet current safety standards – check before you buy! Also, use caution when buying used electrical appliances by making sure they are in good working order and looking for the CSA certification mark. Faulty appliances can cause fires and injuries to the user.
- As you get your bike out for the first cycling trip of the season, review road safety rules. These include stopping at all stop signs and proceeding when it's safe; walking – not riding – your bike across busy streets at marked crosswalks; and making sure you are visible to other road users by using bright lights and reflectors, and wearing light-coloured clothes with reflective tape.



Looking for more seasonal advice?  
Follow us on Twitter for updates:  
@CanadaSafetyCSC.

## Look ahead to *Living Safety*

Our summer issue of *Living Safety* is available in June. Here's a sneak peak!

- Picture-perfect wedding safety: Tips from a professional photographer's perspective, plus advice on planning a safe ceremony and reception.
- Lawnmowers and power-tool hazards: Hundreds of Canadians are injured every year by lawn-maintenance equipment and power-tools. Learn how to identify danger and avoid tragedies.
- Home backyard playground safety: Why do kids get hurt while playing at home? Answers to this question plus eight backyard safety rules your child needs to know.

- Avoid heat illness this summer: Great advice to help you understand and avoid heat illnesses.

Know someone who would be interested in subscribing to *Living Safety*? Please direct them to our website, [www.canadasafety-council.org](http://www.canadasafety-council.org), or contact the CSC at 613.739.1535 ext. 223.



# News Bites

- We are accepting applications for the Sarah Beth Therien Memorial Scholarship. Our French and English press releases were printed in community papers across the country, and news of the scholarship appeared in the Ottawa Citizen. We are contacting post-secondary institutions and high schools to increase our exposure. Information about the \$2,500 scholarship and the application form are available at [www.canadasafetycouncil.org](http://www.canadasafetycouncil.org), and at [www.ScholarshipsCanada.ca](http://www.ScholarshipsCanada.ca). The scholarship selection committee includes John Dalrymple-Fraser, Chairman of the Board of the Canada Safety Council, and Emile Therien, Sarah's father and past president of the CSC. The selection committee will also include a current CSC staff member.

The purpose of the scholarship, along with honouring Sarah's memory, is to raise the profile of safety in the minds of young Canadians and to spur creative safety initiatives across the country.

The competition is open to current undergraduate and college students. High school students entering their first year of post-secondary studies are also eligible to apply. Applications will be accepted until June 15, 2013. Judging is anticipated to commence shortly thereafter.

- Applications are also being accepted for the National Police Award for Traffic Safety to recognize excellence, dedication and initiative in the field of traffic safety by enforcement officers across Canada. The purpose of this award is to identify and commend active enforcement personnel for their work to improve traffic safety, and to encourage others to implement new initiatives or publicize those in which they are already involved. The award is specific to an outstanding achievement completed or reaching a significant milestone within the 2012 calendar year. Best practices collected through the award process are shared broadly with Canada's police community. The deadline for submissions is June 15, 2013. For more information, please contact Judy Lavergne at (613) 739-1535 ext. 221.

- We are celebrating a very successful campaign on firearms safety in the home. This year saw our media exposure more than double that received during the campaign in 2011-12. The campaign has grown to highlight the importance of safety training, along with the need to lock and unload firearms at home. Conservative estimates suggest our public service announcements reached a broadcast audience of several million Canadians.



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- The 55 Alive Driver Course is getting revamped. We are currently consulting with instructors to determine how best to update the curriculum. Once completed, the course will incorporate new information on topics from medical and vision considerations to driving techniques. Changes in vehicle technologies and new regulations governing mature drivers will also be included.
- We are continuing the conversation on drugged driving by creating a series of articles on the topic. This is a project we started during National Safe Driving Week in December 2012 to focus on impairment by drugs, rather than alcohol, while driving. Our series has worked to raise awareness that drugged driving is almost as deadly as drunk driving.
- We are excited to partner with Bridgestone to launch Canadian content for [www.TeensDriveSmart.ca](http://www.TeensDriveSmart.ca)! The website will offer information for kids, parents, teachers, and teens on the dangers, challenges and responsibilities facing new drivers. The information will be available in English and French.

- The ARGO training course is being well received. Courses will be available as registration numbers permit, with a maximum of eight students per course. Additional instructors will be trained in the coming months to deliver the courses in more jurisdictions across Canada.



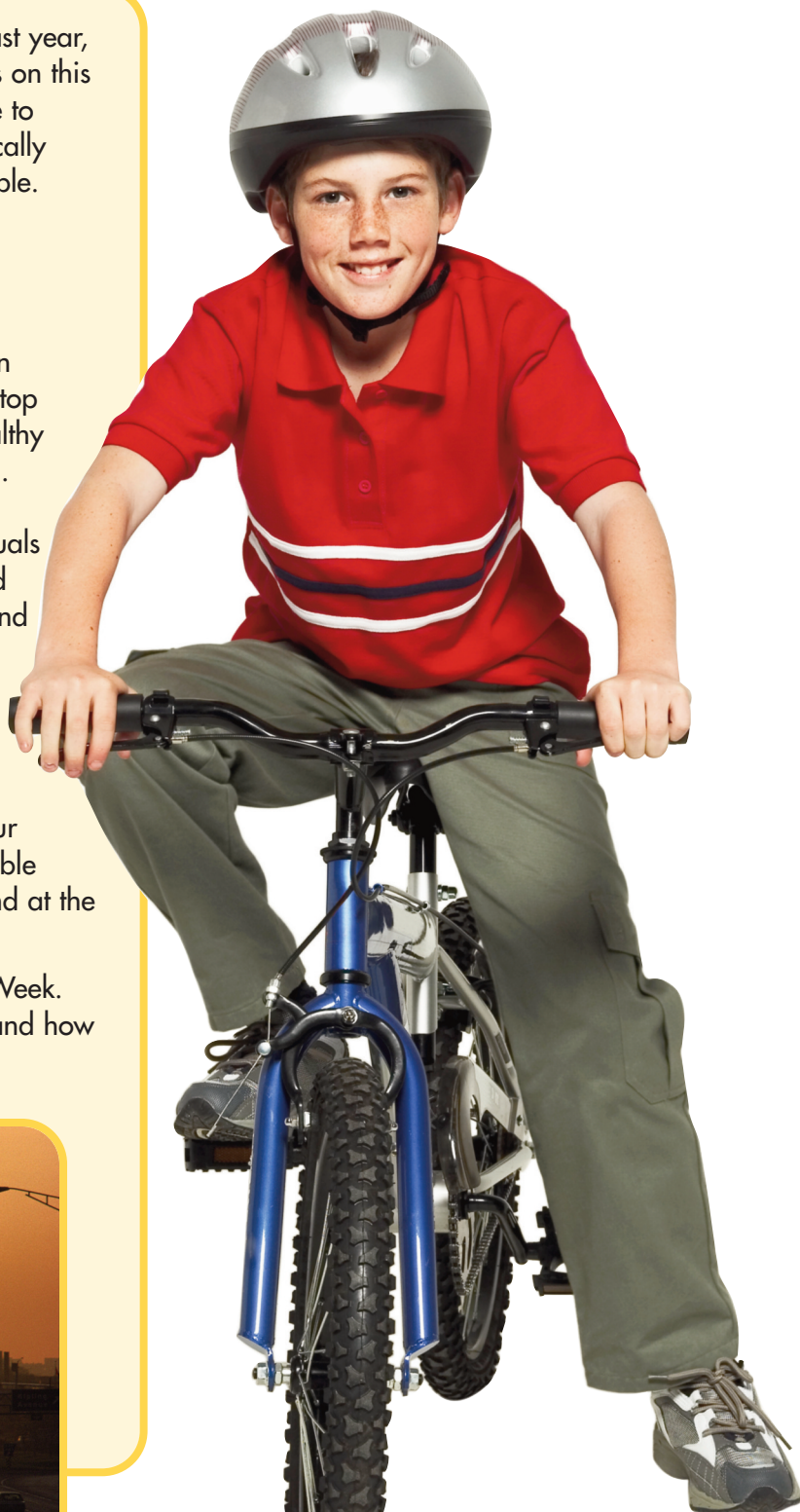
- National Farm Safety Week was March 14 to 20, and this year we focused on vehicle and machinery safety on the farm. Our goal was to raise awareness that up to 70 per cent of all agricultural fatalities are machine related, and that safety always needs to be the primary consideration. CSC conducted dozens of radio interviews on farm safety week, which was especially well-received by our media partners in rural areas. The response is encouraging and indicates a strong, continued interest in the area of farm safety.



- Our Twitter audience has tripled since this time last year, and we are rapidly approaching 1,500 followers on this social network. With more followers, we are able to establish a stronger online presence and strategically communicate our safety information to more people. Follow us on Twitter @CanadaSafetyCSC.

## Looking ahead

- PREVNet's 7th annual conference is May 6 to 7 in Toronto. PREVNet is a CSC partner that aims to stop bullying in Canada and to promote safe and healthy relationships for all Canadian children and youth. Topics covered at the conference will include the latest information on the roles of parents, individuals and organizations in reducing cyberbullying, and information on identify children who may bully and how to help them. To register for the conference, visit [www.prevnet.ca](http://www.prevnet.ca).
- Our Annual General Meeting is April 24, 2013. Members are encouraged to attend.
- National Summer Safety Week is May 1 to 7. Our focus will be on summer safety for children. Possible topics include bicycle safety, safety at the pool and at the lake, and window and blind cord safety.
- We are getting ready for National Road Safety Week. This safety week will focus on safe teen driving, and how road safety is a community effort.



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# Safeguard your privacy on social media

It is easier than ever to surrender personal information via social media. Having a good understanding of privacy and your security settings is needed to help minimize the chances of sharing too much information, or sharing information with the wrong people.

You safeguard your personal information offline to prevent identity theft, fraud and to maintain your autonomy and freedom. The same logic applies online.

"[Social media sites] are now asking for information about when a loved one died, when you got your driver's licence, when you bought a home, when you broke your arm, when you had surgery, when you completed your military service, etc.," writes David Hall, social media expert and blogger.

"Before I surrender any information to my social networks, I always ask myself 'How does sharing this information enhance my experience?' If I don't have a good answer, I often pass."

Think before you post, share or upload. Here are a few more social media privacy safety tips, courtesy of David Hall.

- Never share confidential information online, regardless of your privacy settings. Confidential information includes your complete birthdate, social insurance number, financial information and your home address. But you'd never do that, right? Yet a recent poll by Visa Canada found that 45 per cent of 18- to 34-year-old respondents admit to taking risks with personal and confidential information, such as texting their credit or debit card numbers. Put safety first, and treat all of your accounts as if they were completely public.
- Privacy settings change often and are misunderstood. Check on your privacy settings every month or so to make sure they are still what you set them to. When social networks update their services, sometimes privacy preferences are lost or changed.
- Don't tag other people in photos without their consent.
- You do not have to add every person who asks to be your friend or connection. Delete requests from people you do not know or who you do not feel comfortable sharing your information with. Learn how to block people if your information is being abused or if you are being harassed or bullied.
- Safeguard your passwords. Make them unique, and change them every so often.
- Every couple of months, review what apps you have authorized to access your account information on Facebook, Twitter, and Google+. If you don't use the apps that you have installed, revoke access. These apps have access to lots of your personal information, so make sure to only authorize the ones you actually use. You may be surprised what you have authorized over the years.

Remember that once information or photos are shared via social media, it is almost impossible to completely delete and erase that digital history. Be smart, be safe and safeguard your privacy and personal information online!





## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

# You're social – but are you savvy and safe online?

*Test your social media safety knowledge by answering each question with a 'True' or 'False.'*

- ***You should accept every social media friend request you get. It's all about networking!***

False

Allowing people to access your social media profiles is kind of like deciding who you let inside your house – you don't let everyone in who comes to the door, so don't add everyone who wants to be your friend online either!

- ***You should not tag people in photos without their consent.***

True

For personal and professional reasons, your friends and family members might prefer not to be identified in your online photo albums. Protect their privacy. If they do want to be included, they can tag themselves later.

- ***You should use the same password for all your social media accounts.***

False

Having a single password makes it easier and faster to log into your accounts, but it also makes hacking your accounts and stealing your information easier too. Create unique and strong passwords for each of your accounts and, if you need to, write the passwords down in a safe place. A strong password will have a combination of letters, numbers and symbols. Change your passwords every so often.

- ***You need to set your privacy settings once when you set up your social media account, and you don't need to check the privacy settings ever again.***

False

Social media privacy settings change frequently. Make a habit of checking your settings at least once a month to make sure your preferences are up to date.

- ***You should think about why you're posting or sharing information before you actually do.***

True

It's almost impossible to erase a digital footprint. Part of safeguarding your privacy online is limiting what you post, comment on or share.

- ***It's okay to share confidential information with friends and family using social media.***

False

Operate under the assumption that everything you do online is publicly available. Keep confidential information confidential!

- ***Social media is just too dangerous to use.***

False

You can choose to stay offline entirely, but by educating yourself and taking steps to stay safe, using social media can provide you with entertaining and informative content.

# Safety Canada

Safety Canada is the member newsletter of the Canada Safety Council, an independent, national, not-for-profit safety organization. It is also published online. While strenuous efforts are made to ensure the content represents the best current research and opinions, no guarantee, warranty or representation is made by CSC as to the absolute correctness or sufficiency of all information, and CSC assumes no responsibility therewith. Articles may be printed with credit, except those copyrighted to other organizations.

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