

SafetyCanada

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High Visibility is the Key



The end of summer and the advent of fall always brings about a few certainties. Colourful leaves falling from the trees. Rainy days. Overcast skies. A slight drop in temperature. Less daylight and more darkness. Fall is a double-edged sword of a season because although it's hard to miss a bright red maple leaf falling to the ground, road users are not nearly as easily visible, especially to motorists.

Because of fall's encroaching darkness, people have a more difficult time making out any potential hazards or fellow road users traveling nearby. Regardless of whether you're a pedestrian, cyclist, motorcyclist, driver or any other form of road user, it's important to see and be seen.

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President's Perspective

Visibility on the road is a big issue at any time and each season has its own unique need.

With the advent of fall, we've provided tips on how to make yourself more visible in the feature story of this issue of Safety Canada, but some unexpected road users can't really do much to announce themselves.

Fall months are a prime time for animals to wander across roadways. The tail end of the season coincides with the start of mating season for bucks and deer, and that's closely followed by their winter migration.

Deer aren't the only animals that might decide to suddenly appear in front of you, either. In certain areas of the country, larger animals including bears and moose might cross the road while feeding at night.

Smaller animals are also frequently seen on our roads — squirrels, beavers, skunks and more — and these make it vital that you're constantly alert while driving.

Transport Canada doesn't maintain country-wide data on this topic, but their most recent information showed approximately 40,000 collisions with large animals per year, with the vast majority causing only property damage.

Of course, animal hazards are directly proportionate to the amount of animals in the area.

Newfoundland and Labrador, according to Parks Canada, has one of the highest densities of

moose in North America — which explains the 741 moose vehicle collisions in the province in 2010.

If you find your path unexpectedly obstructed by an animal, slow down gradually. Don't swerve out of the way, since that could put other drivers at risk too.



Honk the horn at short intervals to catch the animal's attention.

If you're driving at night, keep your high beams on whenever possible to give yourself as much time as possible to see them.

Be on guard even after an animal moves off the road. Wildlife often travels in packs and their movements are often unpredictable.

Be wary in case they might decide to jump back on the road or are being followed by other animals.

As a driver, it's your responsibility to avoid collisions, whether it's with a small animal, a big animal, or another road user.

Defensive driving is a valuable skill to have in your toolbox, and using it will help you ensure the safety of all creatures, big and small.

Safety, it's an attitude!

Jack Smith, President

Looking Ahead

Our **National School Safety Week** campaign, which runs from October 17 - 23, focuses on keeping children visible to oncoming motorists as they make their way to and from school in the dusk and dawn hours.

November is traditionally a busy month, with three campaigns being held. November is **National Community Safety and Crime Prevention Month**, and this year's campaign will focus on domestic abuse.

National Senior Safety Week is November 6 - 12, and we'll be tackling the topic of Alzheimer's disease and what can be done to accommodate those who suffer from the degenerative disease.

Following that, our **National Home Fire Safety Week**, November 24 - 30, will discuss electrical fires and the best ways to avoid them.

Our final campaign of 2015 is **National Safe Driving Week**, held December 1 - 7. The topic of discussion there will be winter driving, with an emphasis on snow tires and car maintenance.

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As a driver:

Keep an eye out for children at their bus stops. In the morning, the sun may not be fully out yet and it's easy to lose track of a child's movements in the dawn. Likewise, watch out for children arriving home from school, especially if it coincides with the fall of dusk.

Use the proper headlight settings where necessary. On days where it's particularly foggy, your regular driving lights will reflect off the fog and diminish your field of view. Use fog lights, if your vehicle is equipped with them, to illuminate the road ahead of you.

In non-foggy conditions, high beam lights will greatly improve your visibility, but they should be dimmed when you are within approximately 150 metres of an oncoming vehicle to avoid blinding them.

As a pedestrian or cyclist:

Wear brightly-coloured clothing. This will make you stand out a lot more in the darkness than muted or dark colours, which will make you more easily visible to other road users. Retro-reflective gear will also help you stand out more, as it will reflect the light of a car's headlights and other street lights.

When crossing the street, only do so at proper crossings and stop signs. This holds true at all times, but is especially important when it comes to visibility in the dark. Predictability among road users is very useful when it comes to avoiding danger, and drivers will expect to see pedestrians at a crosswalk far more than crossing in the middle of the road.

As always, defensive driving and following the rules of the road are your allies in staying safe.

The Do's and Don'ts of Trick-or-treating



Whether you'll be handing out candy from your home or you have a little ghoulish or goblin of your own, trick-or-treating is a Halloween tradition that is more of a marathon than a sprint.

And while the candy hunt itself is, of course, the main event, here are a few steps you can take beforehand to ensure that everything goes smoothly:

As a chaperone to a child or a group of children:

DO plan a route and stick to it. Doing so will let you check the route during the daylight for any trip hazards, crumbling sidewalks, areas that aren't well lit or other danger zones.

DO make sure the child's costume is good for trick-or-treating. This means avoiding long capes, dresses and anything that can drag on the ground. Masks should have a full range of visibility and be easy to remove.

DO see and be seen. It will likely be dark out when you're taking your group around the block. Make sure that motorists, cyclists and other groups can see you. Wear bright clothing and/or retro-reflective gear, and bring a flashlight.

DON'T assume the weather will cooperate. Monitor the weather and prepare accordingly. You don't want your child overheating in a fuzzy bear costume. Likewise, if it's very cold out, a fairy costume won't do, either. If there's any doubt at all about the weather, have a backup plan.

DON'T let the children eat candy for dinner. Feed them a healthy meal before they go out. The temptation to eat candy immediately will be much less if you make sure the kids are properly fed first. Also, eating beforehand will improve their moods which, in turn, will improve yours!

DO inspect all the candy before letting the children eat it. Any candy that looks like it has been opened, or could easily be opened and closed again, should be thrown out immediately. Be wary of homemade treats and unwrapped items, too. It's always better to err on the side of caution.

As a stay-at-home candy distributor:

DO pick up items in your yard and on your walkway. You don't want to be responsible for somebody tripping, falling or getting injured. Be sure that items including hoses, flower pots and sprinkler heads are properly stored and out of the way.

DON'T let your pets roam free. Keep them secured. Animals can get territorial at times and, while Halloween is meant to be scary, you don't want children frightened by a large dog pouncing at them.

DO keep your lights off if you don't want visitors. This is a well-known signal that you would prefer not to be disturbed, and chaperoning parents will generally keep their children from knocking on your door.

Ice-skating: Carving Out a Place for Safety

With hockey season starting up, skating rinks will soon be alive with the sounds of skates sizzling on fresh ice, of tape being wound around shinguards or hockey sticks, of laces being done up and of new skaters falling as they try to adjust to the blades strapped to their feet.

Ice skating is a fun way to get exercise and as much a Canadian staple as maple syrup or the loonie.

■ But, like most hobbies where physical exertion is concerned, it's not without its risks.

■ Here are a few tips to help you keep your child safe and off the injured reserve.

Use an indoor skating rink if at all possible. These provide the safest place to skate, since the ice is generally uniform and solid. Outdoor skating rinks, whether on ponds, lakes or manmade, can sometimes be uneven, thin or have bumps and trip hazards.

■ Make sure your child is wearing appropriately-sized skates. The proper fit will help reduce avoidable falls, sprains and blisters, as well as better insulate your child's feet from frostbite. When you're buying skates,

make sure your child is wearing a similar thickness of sock as they will be wearing when they're skating. Otherwise, the fit may be incorrect.

Personal protective equipment is a must. Especially for a relatively new skater, falls will occur. The best way to avoid any damage is equipment: a helmet, elbow pads and knee pads are a great start and will keep your child relatively injury-free while they learn to stay upright.

Tell your child to skate in the same direction as the rest of the skaters. Keeping with the flow of traffic will minimize any possible collisions and allow other skaters to help your child get back up if they fall. Your child should stay close to the outside edge of the rink if they are slower or still learning to skate.

Learning to skate can be an uphill battle at times, but it doesn't have to be a slippery slope.

A bit of prevention and smarts will help your child stay safe, uninjured and happy. They'll be skating around like the pros in no time.



Breakfast, the Most Important Meal

It's a lesson that was taught at a young age and repeated early and often: breakfast is the most important meal of the day.

It's a notion that has come under fire recently.

Past claims that breakfast helps with weight loss have not been conclusively proven which has led a backlash against breakfast.

But despite this, it's still widely accepted that a healthy breakfast promotes a healthy lifestyle that provides the eater the necessary nutrients and energy to make it through the morning without feeling overly groggy or exhausted.

Studies have shown that approximately 40 per cent of Canadians regularly skip breakfast — often, they say, because they don't have the time.

But if something is important, you make time for it. Whether it's waking up earlier, preparing your breakfast before going to bed, or eating something quick, there are many ways to get around the perceived time crunch.

A 2014 study in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition showed that there was no significant difference in weight loss or gain among people who eat breakfast vs. those who don't.



But, it showed, breakfast eating is linked with a higher level of physical activity because of the additional energy output.

This takes out another argument against eating breakfast: trying to lose weight. A person who eats a 300-calorie breakfast will burn off those calories through their increased activity levels, whereas a person who doesn't have breakfast at all won't see a significant advantage from a calorie perspective, and will be lethargic and tired all morning, too.

Breakfast is still the most important meal of the day. Make the time, make the effort, and take 15 minutes to eat a nutritious and balanced breakfast before starting your day.



Safety Training Online

Want to go back to school without leaving home?

Visit www.canadasafetycouncil.org/training

to sign up for online safety training! Courses include OH&S topics, defensive driving, babysitters training, and home alone safety.

Wheels in Motion: Winter tires Make the Difference

As much as we'd all rather not think about it, fall is a sign that winter isn't far behind.

Snow, sleet, ice and a drop in temperature are right around the corner, which means it's time for you to start thinking about putting winter tires on your car.

Quebec is the only province in Canada that mandates their use, but winter tires are crucial to safety in the most treacherous driving season across the country.

Outside of Quebec, winter tires are most used by residents of Atlantic provinces.

According to a 2014 survey commissioned by the Tire and Rubber Association of Canada, 73 per cent of drivers in Atlantic Canada use winter tires.

But the next highest rate of use is Ontario (56 per cent,) followed by Alberta (45 per cent,) Manitoba and Saskatchewan (39 per cent) and British Columbia (38 per cent.)

Most tire companies and experts recommend switching to winter tires once the weather hits less than seven degrees Celsius.

The temptation is always there to roll with all-weather tires all year long, since they require less effort than a bi-annual tire change.

But studies have shown that all-weather tires have far less efficient grip and slide more easily on ice and in wet conditions.

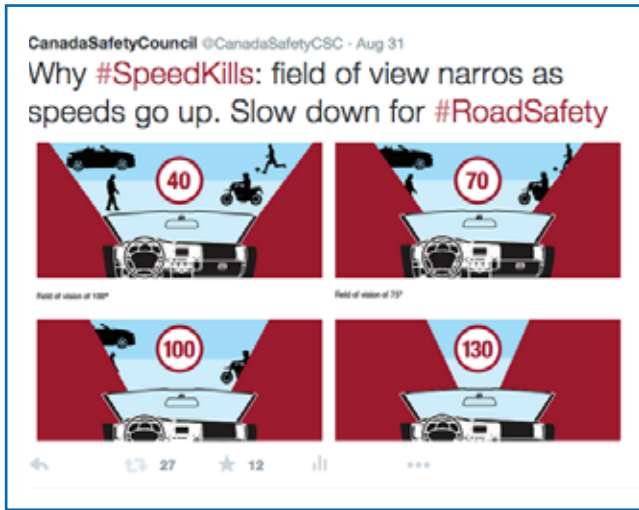


Soft snow is also handled much easier by winter tires as the treads on them are much more aggressive and angled, which in turn pushes the snow away and prevents buildup.

Another advantage to winter tires is the rubber compound that is used, which is designed to stay flexible and maintain its grip in sub-freezing temperatures. All-weather tires, meanwhile, lose their traction at temperatures less than seven degrees.

Your tires are the only thing between your vehicle and the road. Err on the side of caution, because having the right tools at your disposal can make the difference between having enough grip to stop on a slushy patch and sliding into another vehicle's path.

Popular on Social Media



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