SAFETY CANADA

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SHARED SPACES, SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Every day, Canadians move through shared spaces without thinking twice about it.

We ease through intersections expecting others to stop. We step into crosswalks trusting drivers will yield. We go about our work assuming procedures will be followed. Most of the time, those assumptions hold.

Until they don't.

In Canada, "accidents" were the third-leading cause of death in 2024, according to preliminary data released by Statistics Canada, behind cancer and diseases of the heart. Many such incidents don't happen in extreme or unusual circumstances. They happen in ordinary places, during routine moments on the road, at work and at home.

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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE: SLOW DOWN, SAVE LIVES

The Canada Safety Council extends its deepest condolences to the family and friends of Peter Clark, a crossing guard who lost his life while helping children travel safely to school.

Our thoughts are also with the students, families, and community members who saw him each day and were touched by his presence.



Clark was performing a simple but vital task: standing in an intersection so others could cross safely. That role exists because school zones require heightened attention and care. When that care is absent, the consequences can be immediate and irreversible.

This tragedy is a powerful reminder of what is at stake on our roads. It also comes at a time when approaches to managing speed in school zones are changing.

In Ontario, municipal automated speed enforcement cameras were prohibited province-wide effective November 14, 2025, with greater reliance placed on measures such as traffic calming and enhanced signage.

These tools are important, but no single measure is sufficient on its own. Enforcement, infrastructure, and education work together as layers of protection. When one layer changes, the others must become stronger to maintain safety.

While the details of this case remain before the courts, the broader message is clear. Road safety depends on responsible decisions in critical moments. School zones, residential streets, and marked crossings are not routine environments. They are shared spaces where vulnerable road users rely on others to act with care.

Slowing down is a deliberate choice that creates time to see hazards, react appropriately, and prevent harm. In places where children are present, that extra time can save lives.

This loss is felt deeply across the community because it challenges something fundamental: trust.

Trust that those directing traffic will be protected.

Trust that drivers will follow the rules.

Trust that an ordinary school day will remain ordinary.

We cannot undo what has happened, but we can choose how we respond.

Slow down in school zones. Stay alert at crossings. Expect the unexpected, especially where children are present.

Honouring Clark's memory means committing to these actions every time we get behind the wheel.

Make Safety a Priority!



Gareth Jones
President and CEO



Shared Spaces, Shared Responsibility (Continued from page 1)

That's what makes them easy to miss. Risk in shared spaces rarely shows up all at once. It builds in small ways: a touch more speed than conditions call for, a glance away from the road, a shortcut taken to save a few seconds… none of these decisions feels significant on its own, but together they can change the outcome.

In shared spaces, our safety often depends on someone else, whether that's a pedestrian depending on a driver to slow down or a worker depending on a colleague to follow procedure. Control is shared, and so is responsibility.

We tend to think of safety as something built into the system innately. And yes, existing systems to reinforce safety matter. Road design, workplace standards, safety equipment all play a part in reducing risk. But they don't eliminate it. People have a responsibility too.

A crosswalk only works if a driver yields. Safety equipment only protects as intended if it's actively used. Procedures only work if they're followed, even when no one is watching.

The difference between a routine day and a preventable incident is often a matter of a few seconds. More often, it's a matter of a few decisions.

Familiar environments create a false sense of security. The more often we move through a space, the less attention we tend to give it. But shared spaces don't become safer because they're familiar — they become safer when people treat them that way.

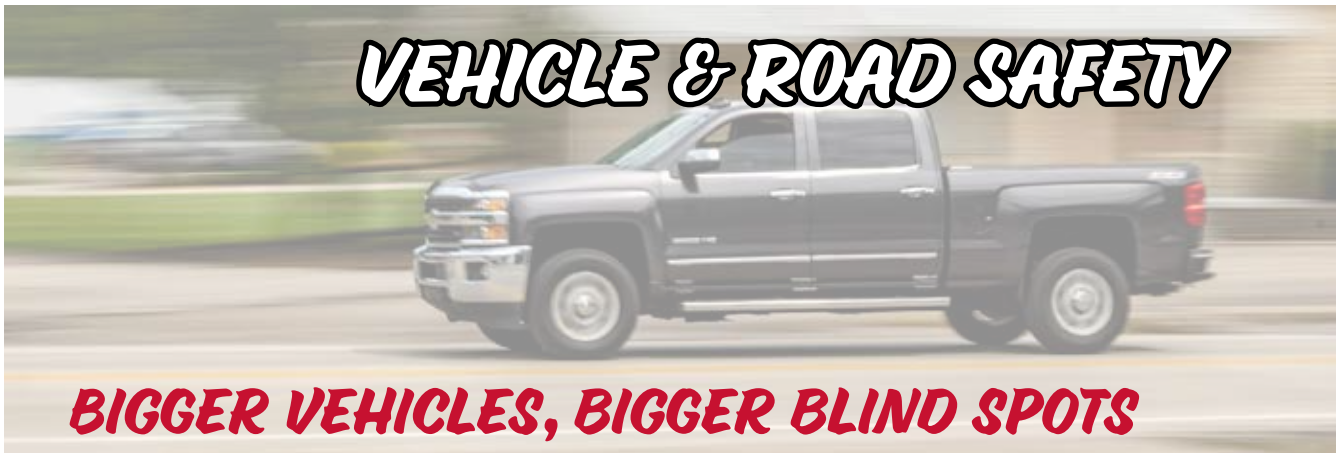
Slow down where others are present, staying alert at all times. Follow procedures, even when the task feels routine.

After all, in shared spaces, consistency is what keeps people safe.

GEARING UP FOR SPRING

The spring thaw means that motorcycle season will soon be upon us! We're launching an enhanced course with updated program materials and content. You won't want to miss it! Click through for more information the Canada Safety Council's Gearing Up rider training program.

https://canadasafetycouncil.org/GearingUp



VEHICLE & ROAD SAFETY

BIGGER VEHICLES, BIGGER BLIND SPOTS

Walk through any Canadian parking lot and the shift is obvious. Vehicles are getting bigger, pickup trucks sit higher, SUVs have broader frames. Front ends are taller than they used to be. For drivers, that often means a greater sense of comfort and control. But for everyone else, it can mean something very different.

According to Transport Canada, light-duty trucks, including SUVs and pickups, now make up the majority of new vehicle sales in Canada. As that shift has accelerated, so has a less visible change: what drivers can and can't see from behind the wheel.

Blind spots aren't new, but they are changing. Larger vehicles create larger reduced visibility zones, particularly in front of the vehicle and along the sides. A driver can be seated higher and still be unable to see a pedestrian, cyclist, or smaller vehicle nearby. That risk is most pronounced in low-speed environments including parking lots, driveways and residential streets, where there's a natural tendency to assume the stakes are lower.

But they aren't.

Many serious incidents happen close to home, at speeds that don't feel dangerous. And like most risks in shared spaces, this one depends on more than one person.

Drivers need to account for what they can't see. Pedestrians and cyclists need to assume they may not be seen at all. The margin for error is small, and it closes quickly when visibility is limited.

Technology helps, with tools like backup cameras, sensors and driver-assistance features now common. They can reduce risk, particularly when reversing or parking. But they don't solve the problem on their own. The fundamentals still matter.

Before moving, take a moment to scan fully around the vehicle. Adjust mirrors to minimize blind spots. Be especially cautious in areas where children may be present, or where sightlines are obstructed. When turning, check again… especially on the right side, where pedestrians and cyclists are more likely to be missed.

For riders, visibility matters too. As motorcycle season begins, positioning, lighting, and awareness all play a role in being seen. Programs like the Canada Safety Council's Gearing Up Motorcycle Training Program reinforce these fundamentals, but they rely on shared awareness from all road users.

Bigger vehicles aren't going away. But the risks they introduce don't have to grow with them.



YOUTH SAFETY

WHAT ONLINE DANGERS ARE TEENS FACING?

(NC) A lot of our lives are spent online. While there are many benefits to being connected, it also carries serious risks, especially for teens. Parents, guardians and trusted adults all have a role to play in knowing how to recognize the signs, and how to intervene safely when teens and youth might be in dangerous or violent situations.

Can violence happen online?

Unfortunately, yes. Violence isn't always physical. It can also be emotional, sexual or financial, and violence that begins online can also spill out into the real world. Another important factor to consider is the prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV). It's when someone is harmed or treated unfairly because of their gender, how they express it or how others see it. Much of the GBV that youth face today happens through the technology they use to communicate.

Understanding tech-facilitated violence

For many young people, tech-facilitated violence is part of their reality. This might look like being forced to share their location, having intimate photos spread, being threatened with sextortion (which is when someone threatens to send sexual content to others unless they are paid or sent more), harassing comments or memes, digital stalking or being outed online. These acts can cause deep and lasting harm that can affect life at home, at school and at work.

Young people are more vulnerable because their lives are deeply connected online, thanks to smartphones, social media, and an increased digital presence. Many find community through the web—it's also a way for them to socialize, forge their identities, improve their mental health and seek safety and support. But this online life comes with risks and vulnerability. Young people often have less power to push back, and abuse can escalate quickly behind a screen.

Making a positive impact

Trusted adults can step in by modelling empathy and respect and keeping communication open with the young people in their lives. It's important to check in with youth regularly to gauge how they're doing online and if they feel unsafe. Adults can help educate them by showing them safe online activities and explain security and privacy settings they can update on their devices. Demonstrating how to stay safe while also ensuring they can participate in their social circles is critical.

Young people need adults who will stand with them. Learn more about what you can do to make a difference and help end the cycle of violence at canada.ca/itsnotjust.

YOUTH SAFETY TRAINING

Are your children equipped with the skills and knowledge to be safe when left home alone? The Canada Safety Council's Home Alone Program is designed to empower youth staying home alone for short periods of time.

Contact csc@safety-council.org for more information on where to find a course near you!

SAFETY CANADA



WORKPLACE SAFETY

FATIGUE IS IMPAIRMENT

Fatigue doesn't always look like a safety risk.

It builds gradually, with attention slipping, reaction time slowing, and judgment becoming less reliable. By the time you notice it, your performance has already changed.

That's what makes it dangerous.

Fatigue can reduce alertness, slow reaction time, and impair decision-making in ways comparable to alcohol. In safety-sensitive environments like driving, operating equipment or working at height, that shift can turn a routine task into a serious incident.

It's also easy to normalize.

Fatigue shows up at the end of a long shift or during a stretch of demanding days. People have a natural tendency to try and push through it and, over time, that becomes the expectation.

But fatigue doesn't just slow you down. It affects whether you recognize present risks at all. Missed cues, delayed decisions and lapses in attention are often where incidents begin.

Even strong systems can't fully compensate.

Procedures, training and supervision all reduce risk, but they depend on people being alert enough to use them hen fatigue sets in, steps get skipped and checks go unfinished.

The risk doesn't end when the shift does.

For many workers, fatigue carries into the drive home or into the operation of other vehicles.

While programs like the Canada Safety Council's Specialty Vehicles Operator Ready (SVOReady) courses reinforce awareness and decision-making, they rely on people recognizing their limits in real time.

Managing fatigue starts earlier than most people think.

Taking breaks before performance drops, planning work and travel with rest in mind, and speaking up when fatigue becomes a factor for yourself as well as for others are simple actions that reduce risk.

Fatigue doesn't need a dramatic moment to cause harm.

It only takes one missed decision.

Looking Ahead

Springtime brings a flurry of activity on the safety messaging front, one spurred by two upcoming national safety campaigns and our Annual General Meeting.

National Summer Safety Week
National Summer Safety Week is held May 1-7, and we will be addressing the first heat wave of the season: how it can catch us off-guard and how we can adapt before our bodies have had the chance to do so.

National Road Safety Week
The 2026 edition of National Road Safety Week will be held May 12-18 and will focus on the risks surrounding vulnerable road users, especially where turns at intersections are concerned.

Annual General Meeting
Please note that our Annual General Meeting will take place on April 14, 2024, at 10 a.m. The meeting will take place at our office in Ottawa and over Microsoft Teams.

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HOME & COMMUNITY SAFETY



CARBON MONOXIDE: THE RISK YOU DON'T SEE

Carbon monoxide is impossible to detect without a device. You can't see it, smell it, or taste it, and early symptoms — headache, fatigue, nausea — are easy to misread.

That's what makes it dangerous.

According to Health Canada, carbon monoxide is a leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in Canada, with most incidents occurring in homes. The risk is not limited to winter or to older equipment; it can develop anywhere fuel is burned.

Seasonal transitions create their own hazards. Furnaces may still be in use, windows remain closed overnight, and generators or other fuel-burning equipment may be used during outages.

These are ordinary situations, and that's where the risk tends to build.

Carbon monoxide forms when fuel doesn't burn completely, and in enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces, it can accumulate quickly.

Without an alarm, people often rely on symptoms to recognize a problem, and by then exposure is already underway.

Prevention is straightforward.

Install carbon monoxide alarms outside sleeping areas and on every level of the home, and test them regularly.

Have fuel-burning appliances inspected and maintained. Never run generators, vehicles, or other fuel-burning equipment in enclosed spaces like garages, even if doors are open.

These are simple steps, but they matter because carbon monoxide doesn't give advance warning.

When the risk can't be seen, the only protection is recognizing where it can form—and acting before it does.

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