



Ontario Provincial Police
Police provinciale de l'Ontario

News Release/ Communiqué

FROM/DE: HIGHWAY SAFETY DIVISION

DATE: September 06, 2011

OPP PLEADING WITH DRIVERS TO TAKE ACTION

"It's time to make better decisions behind the wheel" says OPP

(ORILLIA, ON) – Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Commissioner Chris Lewis says it's time for drivers to do what the OPP is talking about.

"The OPP does their best to provide insight and heighten awareness on the dangers of distracted driving but so what? The vast majority of drivers know it's dangerous. They hear our safety messages but nothing changes because they have not taken action. Hundreds of people have close calls every day. They are consciously aware that they are making a poor decision when they text or use their cell phone while driving", said Lewis.

Distracted driving has been identified as a causal factor in almost 5,000 collisions on OPP-patrolled roads and highways so far this year. This is why from September 12 to 18, the OPP is following through on Week #3 of its 2011 distracted driving campaign "*PHONE IN ONE HAND, TICKET IN THE OTHER*". "Our goal is to give out as few tickets as possible", says Deputy Commissioner Larry Beechey, Provincial Commander of Traffic Safety and Operational Support. "Our goal is to increase compliance with the existing legislation and one of the ways we do that is increasing the risk of being caught."

Holding a device capable of texting or phoning while driving can result in a fine of \$155 under Section 78.1 of the Highway Traffic Act (HTA). Watching an entertainment device can result in a fine of \$110 under Section 78 of the HTA. Other forms of distracted driving can result in a charge of Careless Driving with fines ranging from \$400 to \$2,000, a possible licence suspension of up to two years and/or a jail term of not more than six months.

By this time last year, the OPP had investigated 55 fatal collisions that occurred because the driver was inattentive. This year that total is down to 35. As of July 31, 2011 the OPP had initiated nearly 10,000 tickets for distraction. That's more than double compared to 2010.

This week was selected for the campaign because it coincides with the thousands of students returning to school. Drivers need to be vigilant with children walking to school, crossing busy streets and getting on and off school buses. It is critical that drivers dedicate their full attention to driving.

(more)



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We Want to Hear From You

The OPP encourages the public to sign up and participate in our social media discussions by following the links to our social media accounts posted on the front page of the [OPP website](#). Post your true accounts of the distracted driving behaviour you've seen on our roads. Give us your thoughts on texting while driving or other distractions. Become the medium. Post your own safety message to those drivers that put us all at risk.

Media Resources

Radio stations are invited to download and use Public Service Announcements about the dangers of distracted driving from <http://www.opp.ca/ecms/index.php?id=545>.

Links

[Give Driving Your Full Attention](#)

[What is Distracted Driving?](#)

[Tips on Managing Driver Distraction](#)

[Canadian Automobile Association Poll](#)

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