

OPP ramping up for last long weekend of the summer

With the last of the summer long weekends only days away, the OPP are giving advance notice that they will be honing in on distracted drivers as part of the heightened enforcement they have planned over the Labor Day weekend.

With kids heading back to school next week, distracted driving is of particular concern to the OPP as distraction-related collision fatalities in OPP jurisdiction continue to surpass impaired driving-related deaths this year. According to the OPP, everyone travelling on roads and highways should be equally concerned about this alarming trend.

“Most people would not get into a vehicle with an impaired driver and they are at as much risk in the presence of a distracted driver as an impaired driver,” says Chief Superintendent Don Bell, Commander of the OPP Highway Safety Division. “If drivers do not have the good sense to stop this dangerous behaviour on their own, I encourage passengers to take responsibility for their own safety by speaking up. If you are a passenger in a vehicle and the driver is not completely focused on driving, is talking on a cell phone or even worse ? texting, remind them that they are endangering your life and that you want them to stop,” added Bell.

“So far this year, 47 of the 177 people killed in motor vehicle collisions in OPP jurisdiction involved distracted driving, compared to 32 impaired driving-related collision deaths,” said Deputy Commissioner Larry Beechey, Provincial Commander of Traffic Safety and Operational Support. “Our statistics make it clear beyond a doubt that road users need to pay greater attention to this problem and get on board with our efforts to stop it rather than wait for a devastating tragedy to occur,” added Beechey.

Speeding and other aggressive driving behaviour, impaired driving and seat belt compliance will also be on the OPP's radar over the long weekend. Boaters and offroad vehicle (ORV) users should also be prepared to see a strong OPP presence on waterways and trails, with ORV fatalities up 80 per cent and marine fatalities up more than 15 per cent this year.