

## Failure to heed OPP warnings results in more multi-vehicle collisions

In spite of issuing a stern warning last week, the OPP once again responded to a series of multi-vehicle collisions yesterday along Ontario highways.

Dozens of crashes involving hundreds of motor vehicles, including numerous tractor trailers, occurred in various parts of southern Ontario. The worst crash scene was in the westbound lanes of Highway 401 near Napanee where there were an approximate 150 vehicles, including 15 tractor trailers involved. The collisions occurred during poor weather conditions and reduced visibility.

"We are frustrated that, one week after issuing an important warning, motorists are failing to change their driving behaviour and adjust their driving to the conditions. Yesterday's storm was forecasted by meteorologists and gave motorists ample time to prepare or make alternative plans where non-essential travel was involved, so there is no valid excuse for the mayhem and the resulting injuries we saw on our highways and roads again yesterday," said Blair.

Once again Blair is urging motorists to maintain full control of their vehicles at all times, which means slowing right down and allowing extra space between vehicles. For visibility, motorists are urged to use full headlights in challenging conditions. According to Blair, the OPP observed many drivers failing to take these critical measures and this contributed to the majority of yesterday's collisions.

The collisions included numerous commercial motor vehicles and, while the OPP acknowledges that many drivers of these large vehicles are driving with care, officers continue to observe a number of them who do not slow down and leave ample space and stopping distance. The OPP is asking motorists to report these offenders to police.

Ontarians are incurring significant property damage and personal injury costs, and other direct costs for business and industry due to the unacceptably high volume of collisions so far this winter season. Irresponsible driving cannot continue throughout the winter, said Blair.

The OPP hopes its education efforts and public appeals will lead to immediate changes in driver behaviour and prevent emergency responders from being called to countless collision scenes.

Motorists are encouraged to visit the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) website at <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca> for traveller's information such as winter road conditions, construction reports, road closures, traffic reports, traffic cameras and interactive mapping.