

## Wear your seatbelt this Easter long weekend

Occupant restraint will be the OPP's main traffic focus over the Easter Long Weekend. Officers are urging those few non-compliant drivers and passengers who continue to put themselves and others at risk to buckle up every time they drive. They are asking the motoring public to work with them to keep 2014 seat belt related deaths, currently sitting at nine in OPP jurisdiction, from rising.

Road users should expect to see much higher volumes of traffic over the weekend, making it a particularly important weekend for all drivers, passengers and young children to be properly restrained, regardless of how short a trip people are taking.

The nine victims who have died so far this year in collisions where lack of proper restraint was cited as a causal factor range from 21 to 64 years of age. The OPP recognizes that seat belt non-compliance is largely related to attitude rather than age.

?Young drivers tend to get a bad rap when it comes to seat belt compliance. We are seeing more young drivers than ever buckling up and taking the risks associated with lack of restraint very seriously early on in their driving years. These healthy attitudes paint a positive outlook for seat belt safety on our roads, but those few non-compliant drivers should follow their example?. - OPP Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair, Provincial Commander for Traffic Safety and Operational Support.

?The OPP is very proud that Ontarians have a generally high compliance rate with seat belt laws, but there are still a handful of people who need to adopt the same voluntary compliance mindset as the majority of road users. Driving is a privilege, but is too often thought of as a right. All motorists need to be responsible and accountable for poor driving behaviours because they impact the safety of other road users,? Chief Superintendent Don Bell, Commander of the OPP Highway Safety Division.

Over the Long Weekend, the OPP will also be looking to drivers to help them keep Ontario roads safe from other life-threatening driver behaviours that continue to kill innocent people of all ages. These are: distracted driving, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, speeding and other forms of aggressive driving.

Drivers are also being reminded to respect and obey Ontario's ?Move Over? law when approaching a stopped emergency vehicle. The law requires drivers to slow down, pass with caution and if the road has two or more lanes, drivers must move over into another lane if it can be done safely.

Every year, about 10,000 children (from infants to 12 year-olds) are injured or killed on Canadian roads. Drivers are responsible for ensuring that passengers under the age of 16 are properly restrained and that the proper car seat is being used for young children and is installed correctly.

On March 18, 2014, the fine for distracted driving increased from \$155 to \$280. On March 17, 2014 MTO introduced Bill 173, Highway Traffic Act (Keeping Ontario's Roads Safe) which proposes legislative amendments to further strengthen distracted driving and impaired driving laws.

In 2013, the OPP laid more than 290,000 speeding charges across the province.

As of April 14, 2014 the OPP has investigated 53 fatal motor vehicle collisions in which 58 people lost their lives.