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## THUNDER BAY OPP – MARCH NEWSLETTER

### DISTRACTED DRIVING

Distracted driving refers to all forms of distracted or inattentive driving, such as adjusting a vehicle entertainment or GPS unit or stereo, eating and drinking, using a hand held device, self-grooming or tending to children in the backseat. Drivers need to remember that the true danger to public safety lies in the distraction not the device.

Every driver has a responsibility to direct their entire attention to driving safely.

### What exactly is the distracted driving law?

In Ontario, it's against the law to:

- operate hand-held communication and electronic entertainment devices while you're driving
- view display screens unrelated to your driving

Examples of hand-held devices include:

- iPods and MP3 players
- GPS
- cell phones
- smart phones
- laptops
- DVD players



## What about hands free devices?

You can use any device that you do not touch, hold or manipulate while driving, other than to activate or deactivate it. Actions like dialing or scrolling through contacts are not allowed.

Type of device	Can I use it?
A cell phone with an earpiece, headset or Bluetooth device using voice-activated dialing.	Yes - only to activate or deactivate a "hands-free" function, and only if the device is mounted or secured. Actions like dialing or scrolling through contacts are not allowed.
A GPS screen	Yes - provided the GPS is mounted on the dashboard or windshield. You must input the required information before you start driving.
A portable media player plugged into the vehicle's sound system.	Yes - but you must activate the playlist before driving
Display screens that are built into the vehicle and used for safety reasons.	Yes
Ignition interlock devices.	Yes

## Can I use my hand-held device when I'm stopped at a stop light?

No. With the exception of a call to the police, fire department or emergency medical services personnel, a driver of a motor vehicle must be pulled off the roadway and not impeding traffic, or lawfully parked to use these hand-held devices.

**Note :** It is dangerous to stop on the shoulder of a 400-series highway and drivers are prohibited from pulling off a designated 400-series highway and parking for a reason other than an emergency. If the situation is not an emergency, drivers are advised to exit the freeway at an interchange or pull into the nearest service centre.

It is important to remember that collisions do not just occur while a vehicle is in motion. Drivers stopped at lights and using a cell phone or smart phone (e.g., BlackBerry) are often not paying attention to the light cycle and frequently miss advance turn signals or green lights. They are also not paying attention to the actions of other road users, including pedestrians and cyclists.



## Are there any exemptions to Ontario's distracted driving law?

When driving, you are not permitted to use hand-held communication and entertainment devices or view display screens unrelated to the driving task, with the following exceptions:

- Calling 9-1-1 in an emergency situation
- When the driver is lawfully parked or has safely pulled off the roadway and is not impeding traffic.

Note: It is dangerous to stop on the shoulder of a 400-series highway and drivers are prohibited from pulling off a designated 400-series highway and parking for a reason other than an emergency. If the situation is not an emergency, drivers are advised to exit the freeway at an interchange or pull into the nearest service centre.

Commercial and public transit drivers, as well as public service workers who are engaged in the performance of their duties, will be able to view the display screens of mobile data terminals and logistical tracking and dispatching devices. Specified commercial, public transit (includes bus) and public function drivers, and licenced amateur radio operators have been provided an exemption for the hand-held use of two-way ("CB") radios until January 1, 2021.

Other devices not included in the ban:

- Viewing a display screen used for collision avoidance systems
- Viewing a display screen of an instrument, gauge or system that provides information on the conditions, use and immediate environment of the vehicle or that provides road or weather information
- Ignition interlock
- Car audio screens that display still images

Devices like hand-mikes and portable radios (walkie-talkies) that do not have a microphone connected to a separate receiver may not be used as hand-held devices, but may be used in a hands-free manner. Drivers may use a lapel button or press a button on the device to transmit or receive voice communication as long as the hand-mike or walkie-talkie is mounted or secured and is not being held while driving.

Viewing display screens of a mobile data terminal is allowed for commercial purposes. These devices provide operational information from a dispatcher or control centre, and are essential to commercial operations, including licensed taxi and limousine services, couriers, tow truck and roadside assistance services. Many public services, including public transit, also rely on these devices.



## What are the fines / penalties for breaking Ontario's distracted driving law?

As of September 1, 2015 the fines and penalties for distracted driving have increased.

If convicted of distracted driving, a fully licenced driver (holder of Class A, B, C, D, E, F, G) or a hybrid driver (holder of a full-class licence and a novice licence such as Class G and M1) will receive:

- a fine of \$400, plus a victim surcharge and court fee, for a total of \$490 if settled out of court
- fine of up to \$1,000 if you receive a summons or fight your ticket
- three demerit points applied to your driver's record

If convicted of distracted driving, a novice driver (subject to the Graduated Licensing program) will be subject to escalating sanctions:

- first occurrence will result in a 30-day licence suspension
- second occurrence will result in 90-day licence suspension
- licence cancellation and removal from the Graduated Licensing System for a third occurrence

Novice drivers will not be subject to demerit points.

Drivers who endanger others because of any distraction, including hand-held and hands-free devices, may still be charged with Careless Driving under the *Highway Traffic Act* or even Dangerous Driving under the Criminal Code of Canada.

Both charges carry heavy fines and penalties, if convicted, including 6 demerit points, fines of up to \$2,000 and /or a jail term of six months, and up to two-year licence suspension in the case of Careless Driving. Dangerous Driving is a criminal offence and includes jail terms of up to five years.

The preceding information is provided by the Ministry of Transportation.

## OPP RECRUITMENT

Policing in Ontario is about working with community partners and stakeholders to ensure public safety through a collaborative effort of crime prevention and law enforcement. The OPP provides municipal contract policing, rural policing, traffic enforcement and other police service specialties. Criminal investigations have become more and more complex with the use of computer technology and the internet, requiring officers to be resourceful, skilled, flexible and adaptable to an ever-changing environment.



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The OPP is actively recruiting qualified candidates for the full-time position of Provincial Constable.

Competitive and successful applicants are well-educated and enjoy continuous learning. They have a positive work history and experience in leadership roles, are professional, and strive for excellence. They are honest and accountable, caring, respectful and inclusive, and are passionate about serving and protecting all community members and visitors to Ontario.

Applicants must be willing to serve at any of the OPP's posting locations in the province of Ontario to be considered for a constable position with the OPP.

The Recruitment Officer for OPP North West Region is Provincial Constable Justin Cancelliere. He may be contacted at the Thunder Bay Detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police at 807-939-2133.

### THE OPP SUPPORTS INTERNATIONAL SAFER INTERNET DAY

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) encourage young people and their families to report if you or someone you know is being victimized online.

In January, the OPP and the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (Canadian Centre or C3P) signed an important agreement that highlights areas of collaboration to enhance the safety of children and youth in Ontario. The Canadian Centre operates Cybertip.ca - Canada's national tip line to report child sexual abuse and exploitation on the internet, as well as other prevention and intervention services to the Canadian public.

"The Ontario Provincial Police is working diligently to protect children in our communities, but police cannot be everywhere at once," says Commissioner Vince Hawkes, Ontario Provincial Police. "It is important for parents to be proactive and speak with their kids about their experiences online and potential safety concerns, such as cyberbullying and privacy."

There are many age appropriate internet safety education and awareness resources found on Cybertip.ca. If you know a child who is in immediate danger or risk, call 9-1-1 or your local police.

Useful links:

[Get Cyber Safe](#)

[needhelpnow.ca](#)



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[protectchildren.ca](http://protectchildren.ca)

[kidsintheknow.ca](http://kidsintheknow.ca)

About the Canadian Centre for Child Protection: The Canadian Centre for Child Protection is a national charity dedicated to the personal safety and protection of children. Our goal is to reduce the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, assist in the location of missing children and to prevent child victimization. The Canadian Centre operates [Cybertip.ca](http://Cybertip.ca) - Canada's national tip line to report child sexual abuse and exploitation on the internet, as well as other prevention and intervention services to the Canadian public.

About [Cybertip.ca](http://Cybertip.ca): Since its inception in September 2002, [Cybertip.ca](http://Cybertip.ca) has evolved as a central component of Canada's national strategy to protect children from sexual exploitation on the internet. The tip line has responded to 245,000+ child sexual exploitation reports from the public and referred those reports to law enforcement for investigation, resulting in at least 514 individuals being arrested, hundreds of children being removed from abusive environments and the protection of countless children both within Canada and abroad. [Cybertip.ca](http://Cybertip.ca) also provides education and awareness material to help keep Canadians safe, distributing more than 12 million safety resources free-of-charge to schools, law enforcement, child welfare, industry and other stakeholders over the past 15 years.

### THE OPP SUPPORTS HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS DAY

*Police encourage public to learn the indicators*

In support of Ontario's first Human Trafficking Awareness Day, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is encouraging the public to learn the indicators of human trafficking.

Across Ontario, more and more victims are being recruited from small towns and lured with promises of love and a "better life." Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation or harbouring of persons for the purposes of exploitation, typically in the sex industry or for forced labour.

The indicators of human trafficking are not always obvious. Although the presence of one indicator does not necessarily identify human trafficking, a variety of indicators may point to the fact that an individual is being trafficked and needs help. These indicators may include:



- The individual seems afraid, anxious or depressed.
- Another person controls the individual's conversation.
- Another person speaks on behalf of the individual.
- Another person holds or controls the individual's identification, which may be real or fake.
- There are signs of poor health, hygiene and/or nutrition.
- The individual is wearing inappropriate clothing for the weather or situation.
- There is an age gap between the individual and their companion.
- There are tattoos or branding on the individual to show ownership.
- The individual has scars or injuries from abuse.
- The individual has no control over their money.
- The individual has expensive items but no basic necessities.
- The individual has new, older friends who provide gifts, drugs, expensive clothing and/or jewelry.
- The individual has lost connection with their family and friends.
- The individual misses class regularly, or drops out of school.
- The individual is reluctant to engage with teachers, youth workers, social workers or other adults in their life.

To learn more, visit [opp.ca/humantrafficking](http://opp.ca/humantrafficking).

In support of Human Trafficking Awareness Day, the OPP is completing a [poster campaign](#) to help raise public awareness regarding human trafficking. Posters regarding human trafficking will be posted across the province in hotels, restaurants, transportation centres, arenas, gas stations, schools, and more.

Any person with information regarding possible instances of human trafficking should immediately contact any OPP Detachment or their nearest police authority.

Should you wish to remain anonymous, you may call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS), where you may be eligible to receive a cash reward of up to \$2,000.

## QUOTES

"Human trafficking is a deplorable crime that threatens the safety, livelihood and dignity of those who are being exploited and abused. This is a complex issue that affects some of the most vulnerable people in our society and does not recognize jurisdictional boundaries. It is our duty to act decisively and effectively to recognize and protect these people from exploitation and it is imperative that we have a concentrated effort amongst all our partners to be effective."

- Deputy Commissioner Rick Barnum, OPP Investigations and Organized Crime



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"Human trafficking is not confined to big cities alone. These offences are of a particularly clandestine nature and victims or witnesses are reluctant to come forward to authorities. It is often the most vulnerable members of our society who are most prone to becoming victims of human trafficking.

This is why it is important to increase public awareness regarding the indicators of human trafficking in order to help keep our communities safe."

- Inspector Tina Chalk, OPP Counter Exploitation and Missing Persons Section

### NHL ALUMNI HOCKEY LEGENDS VS LAW ENFORCEMENT ALL STARS IN SUPPORT OF SPECIAL OLYMPICS

On Monday, February 19, 2018, the Fort William Gardens was host to the NHL Alumni for Family Day in Thunder Bay.

The Scotiabank 2018 NHL Alumni Benefit Tour featured NHL legends from Stanley Cup winning teams, classic original 6 hockey teams and local former NHLers representing Thunder Bay, all in support of Special Olympics Ontario and the Law Enforcement Torch Run!

Law enforcement officers from the OPP, Thunder Bay Police Service, Correctional Services and Canada Border Services Agency participated in the event.

The afternoon event was filled with showcasing hockey skills, on ice pranks, and hockey nostalgia. The event provided something for fans of all ages and provided an exciting opportunity to see a lighter side of these hockey greats while raising money for a great cause. The NHL Alumni won the game by a close score of 9-8.

### MARCH BREAK SAFE DRIVING TIPS

With March break just around the corner and the kids preparing for a week away from school, this information is to remind drivers to drive more carefully and with extra vigilance. Kids out of school means kids out on the streets and it is up to drivers to make sure those kids stay safe. Slow down, obey traffic laws and be a little more aware of the smaller pedestrians when out on the roads.





## Slow Down and Drive Cautiously

In residential areas especially it's important to slow down and keep an eye out for children playing in the streets. Since the weather is starting to turn towards spring, it is more likely that young children will be outside playing, and that means drivers should be on alert. Use extra caution in the following areas:

- Near playgrounds where children might be playing
- When coming around corners in residential areas, as children might not be visible before taking the turn
- In school zones – even though school is out kids might still choose to play in school playgrounds, so continue to obey all posted speed limits and drive carefully
- Near recreation centers and other places where children out of school might spend more time
- At crosswalks where kids might be trying to cross the street

While it is always advisable to use caution in these areas, during the spring break it is even more important since kids are more likely to be out playing. Being aware of the fact that so many children are out of school is the first line of defense to ensure accidents are avoided. Remember that kids often run out without looking, and can't be depended on to be watching for traffic in the area. Driving more slowly gives more reaction time when a child makes a sudden move. It makes stopping and avoiding an accident easier.

## Obey the Rules of the Road

All drivers should be obeying the rules of the road at all times, but during times when kids are out of school such as March Break it is even more important to avoid those bad habits behind the wheel.

- Running a red light or a stop sign becomes a much more dangerous move when children might be crossing streets. Higher speeds on the road make it more difficult to come to a stop when a child makes a sudden appearance.
- Be sure to use turn signals so that people on the streets can anticipate where the vehicle will be moving next.
- Avoid distractions behind the wheel such as talking on the phone or texting. Not only are these things illegal and can result in tickets, but they take a driver's attention away from the road when it is needed most.

Keeping all your attention on the road is the best way to ensure the safety of children during March Break.

The preceding information was located on the Insurance Hotline.com information site.



## MARCH BREAK SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR RESIDENCE

This year, the Lakehead District School Board and the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board will have March break the week of March 12-16.

First and foremost, please watch for children that may be out and about being carefree and playing.

If you are planning to travel during the March break here are a few very important reminders:

- Keep your plans private. Do not talk about your trip on social networking sites. Your personal information can be viewed by many people including potential criminals. Don't talk about your trip in public where unwelcome eavesdroppers may over hear.
- Have a friend or neighbour look in on your house to ensure that there have not been any intruders. Have them pick up your mail and newspapers or stop delivery. Have them clear snow from your driveway or walkway so it appears that someone is home
- Ensure your doors and windows are locked. Use dead bolts and holding bars on your sliding glass doors. If you have a home alarm system, ensure it is activated
- Ensure there is a key holder available in such case the alarm goes off while you are away.
- Do not leave a spare key where it may be located by a potential criminal. Ensure a spare key is well hidden where only a trusted friend or neighbour will know the location.
- Ensure that your electronics and valuables cannot be seen from the windows. You may want to consider locking valuables and jewellery away in a safe, safety deposit box or secured at a trusted friend's house. Adjust curtains and blinds accordingly.
- Consider setting your lights on a timer instead of leaving them off or on the entire time that you are away. Also consider setting your TV or radio on timers to give your home the lived in appearance. Don't forget exterior lights or have a motion detector light system installed.

## OPP REMIND THE PUBLIC TO BE AWARE OF CHANGING ICE CONDITIONS

Thunder Bay OPP would like to remind the public to be careful when venturing out on the area lakes and rivers at this time of year during the spring melt. Some of the area lakes may have up to 12 inches of ice thickness or more but near some of the islands and rivers where there are varying currents, the ice is questionable.

- Avoid fast moving rivers and hydro dams.
- Always be prepared when you venture out.



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- Always advise someone of your destination and when you expect to return, carry a cell phone with you, if possible wear a floater suit and have ice picks available.
- Always know the ice conditions before you venture out.

Recommended minimum ice thickness is as follows:

3" (7 cm) or less – **STAY OFF**

4" (10 cm) – ice fishing, walking, cross country skiing

5" (12 cm) – one vehicle – snowmobile or ATV

8-12" (20-30 cm) – one vehicle – car or small pick-up

12-15" (30-38 cm) – one vehicle – medium truck

### CRIME STOPPERS

Crime Stoppers look forward to continuing to work with the community on Crime Prevention initiatives. Keep in mind that if you have any information about any crime, we ask that you contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800- 222- TIPS or 623-TIPS or submit a web tip at [www.tipsubmit.com](http://www.tipsubmit.com). Remember your identity will remain anonymous and you could be eligible for a reward of up to \$2,000.00 and you will never have to testify in court.



If there are other topics you would like addressed in this newsletter or have some ideas, please do not hesitate to call me.

P/C Diana Cole  
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