



THUNDER BAY OPP – APRIL NEWSLETTER

OPP CONDUCT DISTRACTED DRIVING CAMPAIGN

Over the March Break, the Ontario Provincial Police focused on what has been the deadliest kind of driver on OPP-patrolled roads for the fifth consecutive year - the inattentive driver.

Inattentive drivers were behind **83** road fatalities on OPP-patrolled roads in 2017, surpassing speed-related deaths (**75**), alcohol/drug-related deaths (**46**) and those that are linked to lack of seat belt use (**49**).

Since 2009 (the year Ontario Distracted Driving laws took effect), **692** have been killed on OPP-patrolled roads in collisions that involved an inattentive driver.

"By now, the majority of drivers and passengers have witnessed, had a close call or been involved in a collision with a driver who was texting, talking on their cell phone or engaged in some other form of distraction. Last year, the OPP responded to **8,711** crashes that were linked to driver inattention. - OPP Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair, Provincial Commander of Traffic Safety and Operational Support.

DID YOU KNOW?

If convicted of distracted driving, a fully licenced driver 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
- 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.



OPP NAB OVER 2,500 DISTRACTED DRIVERS DURING MARCH BREAK

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) have finalized their Distracted Driving Campaign enforcement data, laying **2,589** charges against motorists who were not completely focused on driving.

The majority (**2,462**) of the charges were laid against drivers caught using their hand-held devices (Highway Traffic Act Section 78.1). Sixty four (**64**) of the charges were for Careless Driving (HTA Section 130) offences for driving while engaged in other forms of distraction.

The OPP also carried out enforcement from transport trucks, giving them an ideal vantage point for spotting commercial motor vehicle (CMV) drivers using their hand-held devices. Of the **2,589** charges, **102** were issued to CMV drivers.

With driver inattention being the deadliest behaviour on OPP-patrolled roads for the fifth consecutive year, the OPP is reminding everyone to adopt and maintain a zero tolerance for drivers who are engaged in any form of distraction behind the wheel.

THE ONSET OF SPRING BRINGS IMPROVED DRIVING CONDITIONS

With the winter weather behind us, for the most part, the onset of Spring and the Easter long weekend is approaching. Officers from the Thunder Bay OPP Detachment and North West Region Highway Safety Division will be patrolling on the local highways and roadways targeting aggressive drivers, distracted drivers, impaired drivers and particular focus will be on ensuring seatbelt compliance.

With the onset of Spring, also brings improved weather and road conditions. The OPP want to remind the public about seatbelt safety as many motorists and passengers let their guard down with these improved conditions. Enforcing seat belt usage and other important legislation intended to reduce high risk driving behaviour is part of the solution to keeping the motoring public safe.

Wearing your seat belt properly will dramatically increase your chance of surviving a motor vehicle collision. For every one per cent increase in seat belt usage, five lives in Canada are saved (Transport Canada). Since seat belts were made mandatory, the number of people killed and injured in collisions in Ontario has steadily dropped. All Ontario motor vehicle drivers and passengers must wear a seat belt in a properly adjusted and securely fastened manner.

At all times, limit the number of occupants in your vehicle to the number of seat belts. Unbelted occupants can become projectiles during a collision and can seriously injure themselves, other passengers, or the driver.



Ontario Provincial Police

Newsletter

Every person travelling in a motor vehicle must wear a seat belt or use a child safety seat. Drivers are responsible for ensuring that passengers under 16 years of age are using the seat belt or an appropriate child car seat.

Police officers may request that passengers who appear to be at least 16 years of age provide their name, address and date of birth. These passengers may face a fine for not using or wearing a seat belt properly.

The set fine for Failing to Wear a Seatbelt is \$240 plus two demerit points.

Seatbelts save lives, wear yours and ensure all passengers are buckled up!

OPP TO HOLD GUN AMNESTY DURING APRIL

Safely surrender weapons and accessories by appointment only

Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) in collaboration with participating municipal police services are holding a Gun Amnesty during the month of April.

The gun amnesty is for any Ontario resident who wishes to voluntarily surrender unwanted or illegally-owned firearms, weapons, accessories or ammunition.

The amnesty is a way to provide citizens with a safe way to surrender weapons and enhance public safety. During the amnesty, police will not recommend weapons-related Criminal Code charges that might otherwise apply to people who are turning in these items.

Police note no amnesty is offered for people who turn in weapons that have been used in the commission of a crime. No anonymous submissions will be accepted.

Interested gun owners are strongly urged to call the OPP (or their local police service's) non-emergency number at 1-888-310-1122 to arrange for officers to attend and safely retrieve the weapons. Gun owners can also use the OPP website button -- www.opp.ca/gunamnesty -- or the Citizen Self Reporting tool to notify police.

Under NO circumstances should anyone deliver guns or ammunition directly to police facilities.



Ontario Provincial Police

Newsletter

QUOTE

"Ontario has seen an increase in break-and-enter incidents where firearms are stolen or targeted by criminals. The OPP and our participating police partners are giving people a safe way to dispose of weapons, imitation weapons and related equipment, accessories and ammunition to reduce the number of guns in their communities."

-- OPP Commissioner J.V.N. (Vince) HAWKES

ADDITIONAL MEDIA RESOURCES - Four video files of OPP Commissioner HAWKES commenting on the Gun Amnesty: <https://www.opp.ca/media/gunamnesty>

DID CANADA REVENUE AGENCY CALL? IT MAY BE A SCAM!

Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) want you to confirm who you're dealing with before sending any money anywhere for any reason.

As part of the annual Fraud Prevention Month awareness campaign, the ever popular [Canada Revenue Agency \(CRA\) and other agency-related extortion threats](#) have continued to sustain significant financial losses by unsuspecting victims. In 2017, the Extortion and Phishing Scam claimed 1,544 victims in Ontario losing approximately \$3 million from more than 8,576 complaints. Police admit only 5 percent of the crimes are actually reported.

In the typical CRA scam, the criminals extort money from their victims by telephone, mail, text message or email, a fraudulent communication that claims to be from the Canada Revenue Agency requesting personal information such as a social insurance number, credit card number, bank account number, or passport number.

A new twist is that Fraudsters will leave a prerecorded, clear message on your voicemail impersonating the real CRA. Fraudsters are either [phishing](#) for your identification or asking that outstanding taxes be paid by a money service business or by pre-paid debit/credit cards.

They may insist that this personal information is needed so that the taxpayer can receive a refund or a benefit payment.

Cases of fraudulent communication could also involve threatening or coercive language to scare individuals into paying fictitious debt to the CRA. Other communications such as texting, urge taxpayers to visit a fake CRA website where the taxpayer is then asked to verify their identity by entering personal information.



Ontario Provincial Police

Newsletter

Before you respond to any type of communication, think first that this is a scam. Individuals should never respond to these fraudulent communications nor click on any of the links provided.

Here are some warning signs:

- Urgency-- The scammer always makes the request sound very urgent, which may cause the victim to not verify the story. For example, they may say "*the police are on their way to arrest you.*"
- Request for Money Transfer-- Money is usually requested to be sent by a money transfer company such as Money Gram, Western Union or even through your own bank institution.

The CRA will never request by email, text or phone, any personal information such as passport, credit card or bank account information.

To avoid becoming a victim, police advise you to hang up, check and verify the information with CRA by calling a trusted phone number in which you have found and not the number provided by the caller.

If you or someone you know suspect they've been a victim of the CRA scam, check with a Canada Revenue Agency official, and contact your local police service and the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](https://www.tipsubmit.com/start.htm), Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS), or online at <https://www.tipsubmit.com/start.htm>

"Recognize, Reject and Report Fraud"

[Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#)

[Competition Bureau of Canada](#)

[The Little Black Book of Scams](#)

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.



Ontario Provincial Police

Newsletter

Avoid fast moving rivers and hydro dams.

Always be prepared when you venture out. 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. 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
Thunder Bay OPP Community Safety Officer
807-939-2133