



THUNDER BAY OPP – MARCH 2019 NEWSLETTER

OPP DISTRACTED DRIVING CAMPAIGN - MARCH 11-17 2019

As of January 1, 2019, penalties have increased

The OPP Distracted Driving Campaign runs from March 11 to March 17, 2019 (during the March Break).

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.

In Ontario, it is illegal for drivers to talk, text, type, dial or email using hand-held cell phones and other hand-held communications and entertainment devices. Find out the risks of distracted driving, which devices you can and can't use and the penalties you could incur.

What counts as distracted driving

Ontario's distracted driving laws apply to the use of hand held communication/entertainment devices and certain display screens.

While you are driving, including when you are stopped in traffic or at a red light, it is illegal to:

- use a phone or other hand-held wireless communication device to text or dial – you can only touch a device to call 911 in an emergency
- use a hand-held electronic entertainment device, such as a tablet or portable gaming console
- view display screens unrelated to driving, such as watching a video
- program a GPS device, except by voice commands

You are allowed to use hands-free wireless communications devices with an earpiece, lapel button or Bluetooth. You can view GPS display screens as long as they are built into your vehicle's dashboard or securely mounted on the dashboard.

Other actions such as eating, drinking, grooming, smoking, reading and reaching for objects are not part of Ontario's distracted driving law. However, you can still be charged with careless or dangerous driving.



Distracted driving statistics

In Ontario, deaths from collisions caused by distracted driving have doubled since 2000.

Ontario data on collisions from 2013 show:

- one person is injured in a distracted-driving collision every half hour
- a driver using a phone is four times more likely to crash than a driver focusing on the road

Penalties for distracted driving

The easiest way to avoid penalties for distracted driving is to not use a hand-held device when you're behind the wheel.

It's against the law to use hand-held communication (e.g. your phone) and electronic entertainment devices (e.g. DVD player, e-reader) while driving.

In fact, simply holding a phone or other device while driving is against the law.

You can use:

- a hands-free device (e.g. Bluetooth) but only to turn it on and off
- a mounted device (e.g. phone, GPS) as long as it is secure – not moving around while driving

If convicted, the penalty you face depends on the kind of licence you hold and how long you've been driving.

Drivers with A to G licences

If you have an A, B, C, D, E, F, G and/or M licence, you'll face bigger penalties when convicted of distracted driving:

- First conviction:
 - a fine of \$615, if settled out of court (includes a victim surcharge and the court fee)
 - a fine of up to \$1,000 if a summons is received or if you fight the ticket in court and lose
 - three demerit points
 - 3-day suspension
- Second conviction
 - a fine of \$615, if settled out of court (includes a victim surcharge and the court fee)



- a fine of up to \$2,000 if a summons is received or if you fight the ticket in court and lose
- six demerit points
- 7-day suspension
- Third and any further conviction(s)
 - a fine of \$615, if settled out of court (includes a victim surcharge and the court fee)
 - a fine of up to \$3,000 if a summons is received or if you fight the ticket in court and lose
 - six demerit points
 - 30-day suspension

Novice drivers

If you hold a G1, G2, M1 or M2 licence, and are convicted of distracted driving, you'll face the same fines as drivers with A to G licences. But you won't receive any demerit points.

Instead of demerit points you'll face longer suspensions:

- a 30-day licence suspension for a first conviction
- a 90-day licence suspension for a second conviction
- cancellation of your licence and removal from the Graduated Licensing System (GLS) for a third conviction
 - to get your licence back you'd have to redo the GLS program

Careless driving

You could face more charges – for careless driving – if you endanger other people because of any kind of distraction. This includes distraction caused by both hand-held (e.g., phone) or hands-free (e.g., Bluetooth) devices.

If convicted of careless driving, you may receive:

- six demerit points
- fines up to \$2,000 and/or
- a jail term of six months
- a licence suspension of up to two years

You could even be charged with dangerous driving – a criminal offence that carries heavier penalties, including jail terms of up to 10 years for causing bodily harm or up to 14 years for causing death.



Tips to avoid distracted driving

Use any of these tips to avoid distracted driving and its penalties:

- turn off your phone or switch it to silent mode before you get in the car
 - put it in the glove compartment (lock it, if you have to) or in a bag on the back seat
- before you leave the house, record an outgoing message that tells callers you're driving and you'll get back to them when you're off the road
 - some apps can block incoming calls and texts, or send automatic replies to people trying to call or text you
- ask a passenger to take a call or respond to a text for you
 - if you must respond, or have to make a call or send a text, carefully pull over to a safe area
- silence notifications that tempt you to check your phone

Calling 911

In an emergency, you can use your phone to call 911, but be sure to pull off the road to a safe area to make the call.

The preceding information is provided by the Ministry of Transportation

OPP REPORT TRAFFIC FATALITIES DOWN ON AND OFF THE ROAD

The OPP is reporting decreases in all categories of fatalities on Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)-patrolled roads, waterways and trails in 2018, when compared to the previous year.

(All data is preliminary and reflects OPP-patrolled jurisdictions only):

Roads

There were 296 fatal road collisions last year in which 333 people lost their lives. By comparison, there were 304 fatal crashes and 343 deaths in 2017.

While fatal crashes were slightly down, personal injury and property damage collisions drove numbers up. In total, the OPP responded to 72,060 collisions last year, compared to 68,782 in 2017.



Road deaths in all but one of the "Big Four" categories were down last year. The "Big Four" refer to the four main causal factors in road fatalities and account for the majority of deaths on our roads. Most notably, last year marked the lowest number of inattentive-related road deaths in almost 10 years.

"Big Four" causal factors:	Fatalities	Fatalities
	2018	2017
Inattentive-related:	55	82
Speed-related:	76	75
Seat belt-related:	50	51
Alcohol/drug-related:	56	58

Transport Trucks

There were 7,674 collisions involving transport trucks in 2018, marking a four-year high. Fifty five (55) of the crashes were fatal and 1,142 of them resulted in personal injuries. In 2017, there were 7,287 transport truck collisions, 79 fatal incidents and 1,253 personal injury crashes.

Transport truck drivers were reported as being at-fault in just over half of the collisions over the two-year period, with improper lane changes and following too closely being the top contributing factors.

Motorcycles

Thirty-six (36) people died in motorcycle collisions last year, with speed and losing control topping the list of contributing factors. By comparison, there were 48 fatalities in 2017 with improper turning and alcohol impairment as the lead factors.

Off-road

Nineteen (19) people died in off-road vehicle incidents in 2018, compared to 22 the previous year. More than half (10) of the riders who died were not wearing a helmet and alcohol was a factor in almost half (8) of the fatalities. Over the past ten years, alcohol has been a factor in 42 per cent of off-road vehicle fatalities.



Marine

Twenty-four (24) people lost their lives in boating incidents last year, down from 31 deaths in 2017. All but two (22) of the deceased were not wearing a personal floatation device (PFD). Over the past ten years, 85 per cent of those who died in boating incidents were not wearing a PFD or life jacket. Falling overboard and capsized vessels continue to be the top two primary causes in boating deaths.

Snowmobiles

There were 13 people killed in snowmobile incidents during the 2017/18 season, compared to 27 in 2016/17. Over the past ten years, 37 per cent of snowmobile fatalities have occurred on frozen waterways. Over the same ten-year period, the primary "driver action" associated with the fatalities was driving too fast for the conditions.

Traffic charges

In 2018, OPP officers laid a total of 381,714 traffic-related charges under the Highway Traffic Act and Criminal Code. There were 375,965 such charges laid in 2017.

The OPP is proud to be patrolling some of the safest highways in North America and attributes this to strong partnerships with government and other agencies.

"While we are pleased to see positive results, our traffic data should not be viewed as mere numbers. They represent people - passengers, safe drivers, innocent human beings of all ages whose lives were ended because of drivers who were careless and took unnecessary risks. Safe, defensive driving is the only way to prevent more lives from being lost. Every driver owes this to the citizens of Ontario."

- Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair, Provincial Commander of Traffic Safety and Operational Support.

OPP ANTI-RACKETS AND ITS PARTNERS NEED YOU TO #KNOWFRAUD

March is Fraud Prevention Month

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) Anti-Rackets Branch and its [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#) (CAFC) partners are launching their annual Fraud Prevention Month campaign to help prevent Canadians from falling victim to fraud.



Ontario Provincial Police

Newsletter

During the month of March, the OPP, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, CAFC, Serious Fraud Office, the [Competition Bureau of Canada](#) and other partners are joining police services across the country to promote public awareness to help prevent all Canadians from becoming victims of fraud.

This year, the OPP Fraud Prevention Month education campaign will highlight four mass marketing fraud priorities as indicated by the CAFC:

- Advanced Fee Scam (Money Transfers)
- Phishing and Ransom Scam
- Romance Scam; and,
- Ecommerce Scam

During the past year, Canadians have fallen victim to fraud's destructive toll, causing losses totaling approximately \$100 million, with Ontario victims losing approximately \$45 million. Unfortunately, this only represents approximately five per cent of the fraud victims that report their crimes to police. Regardless of age, gender or location, everyone can take basic steps to better protect themselves from becoming a victim of fraud. Some basic tips include never giving out personal or financial information at the door, over the phone, by e-mail or through social media, or on to unsecured retail or dating websites. If you do fall victim to a scam, individuals are urged to continue to report these scams to police even if a financial transaction did not occur.

Fraud Prevention Month is about the fraud prevention community working together to create greater awareness and to highlight the various ways that all Canadians are being targeted by fraud. By emphasizing the education component, Canadians can be better prepared.

The OPP will be posting tips and links to various resources online. The public is encouraged to engage in the conversation to help them [recognize](#), reject and [report fraud](#)" on social media by using the hashtags **#FPM2019** and CAFC's new hashtag **#knowfraud** .

If you or someone you know suspect they've been a victim of fraud, contact your local police service and the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre by phone or online by creating an account in the [Fraud Reporting System \(FRS\)](#).



QUOTE

"Victims of fraud can be left with devastating consequences, not only to their finances but to their emotional and psychological wellbeing. Protect yourself. If you fall prey to a scam, report it. The more we know about how these crimes are perpetuated, the better equipped we are to help protect innocent people and prosecute offenders."- Detective Insp. Anne GOODWIN, OPP Anti-Rackets Branch

LEARN MORE

For more fraud facts and figures and a downloadable booklet (PDF), visit The Competition Bureau of Canada website at <https://www.competitionbureau.gc.ca/eic/site/cb-bc.nsf/eng/home> or by visiting <http://www.opp.ca> and [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#)

OPP WARNS OF DANGEROUS SLUSH CONDITIONS ON AREA LAKES

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is advising the public to plan ahead when it comes to recreational snowmobiling. In the past few weeks there has been a surge in calls for help from stranded sledders on local lakes. The substantial snowfall this winter has produced extreme slush conditions wreaking havoc on area lakes. There are a number of concerns in regards to these types of calls including location and time. With the drastic drop in temperatures during the night, getting stuck in slush could quickly become a life and death situation.

If you are going sledding please plan ahead.

- Check ice conditions on the route you are taking, avoid unknown lakes.
- Ensure you have a charged cell phone and an extra power supply. Keep them in a warm pocket.
- Stay on approved trails and don't venture into unknown areas.
- Avoid alcohol consumption while sledding.
- Always travel in pairs, never alone.
- Dress in layers and bring an extra set of mitts/socks.
- Always carry an axe and small shovel in case of an emergency.
- Bring a lighter and paper in your backpack.
- Advise someone of your plans and when you will be back.
- Try not to travel at night and reduce your speed.
- Bring snacks (granola bars) and water
- If you get stuck, monitor your body for signs of hypothermia



The OPP encourages snowmobilers to adhere to OFSC trails, as these remain the safest areas to ride on. The OPP remains committed to ensuring that snowmobiling remains a safe recreational activity in Ontario.

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 11-17, 2019.

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.



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.



Ontario Provincial Police

Newsletter

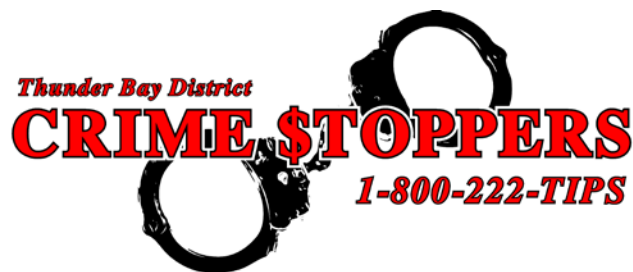
- Avoid distractions behind the wheel such as talking on the phone or texting. Not only are these things illegal and can result in tickets, but they take a driver's attention away from the road when it is needed most.

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.

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 <http://www.p3tips.com/273>. 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



March is.....

International Fraud Prevention Month

International Women's Day and United Nations Day for Women's Rights and

International Peace

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

April is.....

World Health Day

National Volunteer Week

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