



Canadian Road Safety News Digest

A monthly compilation of national, provincial and local news stories on road safety

For the Period November 1-30, 2019

Rising marijuana use by drivers and growing prevalence among drivers in fatal crashes warrants concern

November 28, 2019, TIRF (OTTAWA, ONTARIO)

The Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) announces the release of two new fact sheets on marijuana use by drivers in Canada. National trends in the use of marijuana among Canadian drivers are summarized in TIRF's Road Safety Monitor 2019: Trends in Marijuana use among Canadian Drivers. The RSM is an annual public opinion survey conducted by TIRF and co-sponsored by Beer Canada and Desjardins. The presence of marijuana among fatally injured drivers involved in crashes is reported in a second fact sheet, Marijuana Use Among Drivers in Canada, 2000-2016, also sponsored by Desjardins.

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Nearly half of Canadian drivers think vehicle safety technology poses a risk to road safety

November 27, 2019, Canada Newswire (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

Your vehicle brakes automatically to avoid a collision. It beeps to warn you if there is a car in your blind spot. The steering wheel vibrates if you unintentionally drift out of your lane or start crossing lanes without signaling. A light flashes to warn you of a risk of frontal collision. These features are all designed to make driving safer, but nearly half of Canadian drivers also think they pose a risk to road safety, according to a recent survey released by Desjardins Insurance.

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Temporary freeze on new photo radar devices; new rules coming

November 26, 2019, CTV News (EDMONTON, ALBERTA)

The province is putting a temporary freeze on new photo radar devices and locations while it reviews their use in Alberta.

"Our number one priority is safety and we need to ensure that photo radar is used to create safety and not simply as a revenue-collecting device," Transportation Minister Ric Mclver said.

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Road safety plan sets sights on reducing injuries, deaths by 20%

November 25, 2019, CBC News (OTTAWA, ONTARIO)

It's not quite "Vision Zero," but the latest investment in Ottawa's push toward safer roads for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers is a step in the right direction, Mayor Jim Watson said Monday.

"This plan aims to continue progress towards zero fatalities or major injuries on our roadways, and has a goal of reducing by 20 per cent the average annual rate of fatal and major injury collisions by 2024," Watson announced at the corner of Gladstone Avenue and Bay Streets, where new traffic lights will soon be installed.

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A form of 'victim blaming'? Pedestrian safety session for seniors aims to curb deaths, but also draws ire

November 23, 2019, CBC News (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

Toronto police took to a Scarborough mall Saturday with a pedestrian safety session targeted specifically toward seniors – but the initiative has some calling foul over what they say is "victim blaming."

The session, held at Woodside Square mall, was an attempt to curb senior pedestrian injuries and deaths, with officers sharing safety tips and handing out reflective arm bands.

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Drive drunk twice in Quebec, get ignition breathalyzer for life

November 22, 2019, CBC News (MONTREAL, QUEBEC)

Starting Monday, Quebec motorists convicted of drunk driving twice in 10 years will have to blow into a breathalyzer every time they start a car – for the rest of their lives.

Their licence will be branded so any intercepting police officer will know to inspect the driver's ignition for an interlock device – a piece of equipment that prevents the car from starting if the driver's estimated blood alcohol concentration is above the legal limit.

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Tens of thousands of teenagers impacted by Manitoba Public Insurance's popular Friends for Life speaker series

November 21, 2019, MPI (WINNIPEG, MANITOBA)

Thousands of Manitoba high school students will listen to impactful, first-person stories of how making a bad decision can lead to death or life-changing injuries as the result of an automobile collision. Manitoba Public Insurance's highly popular Friends for Life speaker series opened this week with four keynote speakers visiting more than 40 schools during November.

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Toronto police board reinstates traffic squad after spike in collisions

November 21, 2019, The Star (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

A squad of police officers dedicated to catching drivers who endanger pedestrians and cyclists will soon be patrolling Toronto streets for the first time since 2013, amid ongoing deaths and serious injuries.

The Toronto Police Services Board on Thursday approved creation of a traffic enforcement squad – two teams, each with three officers and a supervisor, covering a morning shift and evening shift every weekday – smaller than one disbanded years ago after helping reduce collision numbers.

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Time to road test Swedish highway model in Northern Ontario, says committee

November 21, 2019, Timmins Today (TIMMINS, ONTARIO)

A Temiskaming highway safety group vows to keep the pressure on Queen's Park to trial a proven Swedish-engineered roadway model with a 20-year track record at reducing fatal collisions.

While the Ministry of Transportation's stance isn't entertaining the idea of test-driving the 2+1 model on Ontario highways anytime soon, Mark Wilson of the Going the Extra Mile (GEMS) Committee said a provincially commissioned engineering report makes some findings and recommendations that suggest otherwise.

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Why is it okay that cars kill?

November 20, 2019, The Globe and Mail (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

Torontonians are full of stories about near-misses with a driver, about almost being hit by someone running a red light or ignoring pedestrians' right of way. A couple of weeks ago, during their not-even 10-minute walk to school, my husband and kindergartner were almost hit when a driver failed to even slow down while turning right. The car only stopped when my husband thumped the hood so hard that his hand hurt the next day.

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Road-safety regulator rapped over regulating autonomous cars

November 20, 2019, Yahoo Finance (WASHINGTON, D.C.)

The nation's road-safety regulator is under fire again for what critics call lax oversight of tests involving autonomous vehicles.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration doesn't give enough direction to companies developing automatous cars, the chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board said Wednesday.

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Head's up: Distracted driving penalties are getting tougher

November 19, 2019, SGI (REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN)

The cost of a first-time ticket will more than double; repeat offenders to pay even more. Drivers in Saskatchewan who make the unsafe decision to drive while distracted will soon be paying more for a ticket, with escalating fines for repeat offences within a 12-month period. Changes take effect Feb. 1, 2020.

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NDP blasts Conservatives over winter road safety

November 19, 2019, North Bay Nuggett (NORTH BAY, ONTARIO)

Sudbury NDP MPP Jamie West, blasted the Doug Ford government during question period Tuesday for suggesting that the current state of “treacherous and poorly maintained winter roads” in Northern Ontario is good enough for Northerners.

Last week, the Ford government unanimously voted against a bill from NDP MPP Guy Bourgouin (Mushkegowuk—James Bay), the Making Northern Ontario Highways Safer Act – legislation that would have improved winter maintenance on highways 11 and 17.

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November 20: National Day of Remembrance places focus on road fatalities

November 15, 2019, The Reston Recorder (RESTON, MANITOBA)

As of the end of this October, 60 people have been killed in motor vehicle collisions on public roadways in Manitoba. Manitoba Public Insurance, in partnership with its road safety partners, is hoping the annual National Day of Remembrance for road crash victims encourages all motorists to think road safety.

“To know that 60 people this year have lost their lives in motor vehicle collisions is very concerning,” said Satvir Jatana, vice-president responsible for communications, Manitoba Public Insurance.

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Police chief proposes new Vision Zero enforcement team amid spike in collisions

November 15, 2019, CBC News (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

Amid growing public pressure to crack down on dangerous drivers, Toronto police Chief Mark Saunders is pushing for the creation of a dedicated traffic enforcement team.

Saunders' proposal is included in a report that will be considered by the Toronto Police Services Board at its next meeting on Nov. 21.

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Province reviewing photo radar use, effect on road safety

November 13, 2019, Winnipeg Free Press (WINNIPEG, MANITOBA)

The province is putting photo radar on the examination table after 17 years of sending expensive surprises in the mail to motorists caught speeding or running red lights on Winnipeg streets.

Infrastructure Minister Ron Schuler announced a "comprehensive review" Wednesday of how and where the technology is being used and whether it's achieving its goal of improving road safety.

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Gas tax money to fund pedestrian scramble pilot and other road safety measures: report

November 13, 2019, CTV News (WINNIPEG, MANITOBA)

The city is releasing more details on how some of the federal gas tax money is being spent on short-term road safety measures.

In the spring, the city earmarked \$2.5 million dollars to improve street safety following the deaths of two children near schools.

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The ins and outs of Ontario roundabouts

November 13, 2019, tvo.org (KITCHENER, ONTARIO)

...Once common along the Queen Elizabeth Way, roundabouts fell out of favour in the mid-1970s amid safety concerns before returning to Ontario in the early 2000s, this time with tighter corners, speed controls, and the requirement that vehicles yield to oncoming traffic.

They've been steadily gaining traction across the province. Hamilton, London, and St. Thomas have added them, and they're also being constructed in rural areas, including North Perth and Zorra Township. But, while experts tout such benefits as improved traffic flow and safety, the relative novelty of the infrastructure can pose problems.

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Majority of Cannabis-Impaired Drivers are Confident in Their Ability to Drive

November 13, 2019, The Standard (ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO)

As cannabis edibles and extracts are officially legal, Canadian Automobile Association South Central Ontario (CAA SCO) is releasing new data that suggests Ontario drivers are hazy about the dangers of cannabis-impaired driving.

The new CAA study conducted by Dig Insights found that approximately 1.2 million Ontario drivers have, at some point, driven high after consuming cannabis and most, (71 per cent) are confident in their ability to drive under the influence...

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Distracted driving is as dangerous a crisis today as impaired driving was decades ago. What are Canadians doing about it?

November 9, 2019, Globe and Mail (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

In the past decade, distraction-related crashes have been sharply rising, and cellphones are a major culprit. But getting drivers to put their devices down isn't easy, and experts worry penalties aren't enough - attitudes about technology and safety need to change.

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Police partner with truck drivers to promote pedestrian safety

November 8, 2019, CTV News (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

The Toronto Police Service has partnered with city officials and commercial truck operators to promote pedestrian safety.

Sgt. Brett Moore with the Toronto police said the “Safety for Pedestrians” campaign urges truck operators to be alert at all times.

“We want to send a message out to people that might play loose and fast with the rules of the highway traffic act that officers are out paying attention,” he told CTV News Toronto on Friday morning.

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Stop trying to multitask while driving. You’re bad at it. Everyone is. This is why

November 8, 2019, Globe and Mail (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

Picture yourself behind the wheel of a car. At normal highway speed, you're going more than 30 metres in a second. Concentration can be a matter of life and death. But within reach there's often a device designed for distraction. It might be the same one you're using to read this article.

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Province announces stronger consequences for impaired driving come into effect Dec. 16

November 7, 2019, Government of Manitoba (WINNIPEG, MANITOBA)

Tougher and more timely consequences for drinking and driving in Manitoba will come into effect Dec. 16 including new sanctions that will see drivers temporarily lose their vehicles for registering a ‘warn’ on an approved screening device, Justice Minister Cliff Cullen announced today.

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Report on Uber crash questions testing of self-driving cars

November 7, 2019, The Star (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

Documents released this week by a federal agency raise questions about whether a self-driving Uber SUV that ran down a pedestrian last year should have been allowed on public roads for test purposes.

A National Transportation Safety Board report on the March 18, 2018 crash in Tempe, Arizona, that killed Elaine Herzberg, 49, found that the Uber self-driving system couldn't determine if she was pedestrian, vehicle or bicycle. It also could not predict that she was jaywalking in the path of the moving SUV.

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After a drink or two, drivers could have vehicle impounded

November 7, 2019, Winnipeg Free Press (WINNIPEG, MANITOBA)

If you're the kind of driver who hits the road after a tippie or two, consider yourself warned: as of Dec. 16, Manitoba police will have new powers to impound vehicles and issue fines following quick roadside alcohol-screening tests, without laying a charge of impaired driving.

"This will help ensure immediate, significant and clear consequences if you drink and drive," said Justice Minister Cliff Cullen at Thursday's announcement at RCMP D Division Headquarters on Portage Avenue. "You will lose your licence, you will lose your vehicle, and you will lose a lot of money."

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Privacy, safety advocates clash over 'Textalyzer' test for distracted drivers

November 4, 2019, CTV News (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

New technology being considered for Canadian police to use to catch distracted drivers is raising concerns among privacy advocates over potential risks to personal data. The device, known as a 'Textalyzer,' would allow police to do roadside scans on suspected distracted driver's cellphones, to reveal if they were using the devices while driving.

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Trucks against drunk drivers

November 4, 2019, Castanet (VANCOUVER, B.C.)

With the holiday season just around the corner, Mothers Against Drunk Driving is partnering with a Canadian trucking company to make sure impaired drivers are taken off the road.

Westcan Bulk Transport, which operates throughout Western Canada, the Northwest Territories and Ontario, is alerting the public to the dangers of impaired driving and how they can help by calling 911.

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City launches road safety campaign as clocks turn back

November 1, 2019, The Star (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

The city has launched a road safety campaign urging drivers to slow down and watch for pedestrians as daylight hours dwindle.

Mayor John Tory kicked off the initiative at a city transportation facility near King Street West and Dufferin Street on Friday morning, ahead of clocks turning back Sunday at the end of daylight saving time.

According to the city, collisions involving pedestrians spike by more than 30 per cent during the evening commute hours from November to March.

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MADD launches Project Red Ribbon to deter impaired driving

November 1, 2019, CTV News (EDMONTON, ALBERTA)

The Edmonton and area chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving is asking residents to tie a red ribbon to their vehicle, key chain, purses, brief cases or backpacks to remind others not to drive drunk this holiday season.

The Project Red Ribbon campaign is an annual event, and MADD even offers a ribbon decal for vehicles.

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SGI focuses on suspended drivers and uninsured vehicles this November

November 1, 2019, CKRM Radio (REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN)

SGI's November Traffic Safety focus of the month is on suspended drivers and uninsured vehicles.

SGI's Tyler McMurchy says the consequences can be steep. "Potential consequences for driving while suspended include immediate vehicle impoundments, court summons for charges either under the Traffic Safety Act or Criminal Code and those carry with them potential fines and or jail time."

McMurchy says police and other enforcement agencies have new tools to catch suspects, including Automated License Plate Readers. "They can scan up to one license plate per minute and they can tell the officer whether that license plate is expired or whether the registered owner has a suspension."

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Canadian Events & Conferences in 2020

Ontario Road Safety Forum – 7th

Toronto, Ontario

April 30, 2020

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6th International Symposium on Highway Geometric Design

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

June 28-July 1, 2020

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CCMTA Annual Meeting

Charlottetown, PEI

May 31-June 3, 2020

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