



Canadian Road Safety News Digest

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

For the period July 1st to 31st, 2016

Self-driving cars could literally reshape the Canadian landscape

July 28, 2016, AutoFocus (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

There's been some discussion about how autonomous vehicles (AVs) will change the way we drive—but not as much about how they'll change what we drive on. We look at the future of roads, traffic and infrastructure in the age of self-driving cars

...Infrastructure changes won't happen overnight. "There will likely be a long period of time where we have a mixed fleet of both AVs and traditional vehicles that will require traditional infrastructure," says Mike Barnet, senior project engineer, intelligent transportation systems for Ontario's Ministry of Transportation.

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Friday worst day for long weekend road deaths/injuries — Manitoba Public Insurance

July 28, 2016, MPI (WINNIPEG, MANITOBA)

With 2016 already recording higher than normal road fatality counts, Manitoba Public Insurance is putting out a call for road-safety action by all Manitoba motorists, heading into the August long weekend. Disturbingly, 35 percent of all holiday long weekend road deaths and injuries occur on the Friday, according to claims data collected by Manitoba's public auto insurer.

On average, one person is killed and more than 80 others are injured over a long holiday weekend — with Friday being the worst day. Conversely, Saturday and Monday have the smallest proportion of victims per day, according to claims data collected between 2011-2015.

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Opinion: Speed limit increases prove deadly, should be reversed

July 27, 2016, Vancouver Sun (VANCOUVER, BC)

...In 2014, the B.C. Transportation Ministry hypothesized that higher speed limits might improve safety. On many highways, the higher speed cars (“85th percentile”) were travelling faster than the speed limit.

The ministry thought that by increasing speed limits on these highways, slower cars would speed up but the fastest ones would not, thus narrowing the speed differential between the slowest and fastest cars and reducing conflict. They expected safety to be improved. Speed limits were increased, typically by 10 km/h, on 33 segments of our rural highways.

We now have three sets of evidence testing this hypothesis...

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New Ontario campaign puts tongue-in-cheek spin on anti-texting-and-driving message

July 26, 2016, theStar.com (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

Ontario is turning to humour in a new social media ad aimed at getting drivers – particularly millennials – to put down the phone when behind the wheel.

The 53-second video tweeted by Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca begins with a young guy texting with one hand and steering with the other. It’s the second commercial in the \$1 million “put down the phone” campaign.

[See the video...](#)

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One-third of bicycle crashes in downtown Toronto involve streetcar tracks

July 26, 2016, The Globe and Mail (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

One-third of bicycle crashes in downtown Toronto involve the city’s sprawling network of streetcar tracks, a joint study by Ryerson University and the University of British Columbia reveals, bringing to light the seldom-studied impact of transit infrastructure on cyclist injuries.

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Support for Vision Zero traffic safety plan: Poll

July 23, 2016, Toronto Sun (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

While Torontonians support City Hall's new plan to cut cyclist and pedestrian deaths on our roads, half think it will never reach the ambitious target.

That according to a new Forum Research Poll which says the Vision Zero traffic safety plan is supported by 60% of survey respondents. But of those polled, 54% say they don't think the \$40-million scheme can reach its target of zero cyclist and pedestrian deaths.

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74 tickets issued to new drivers not following licence restrictions in June

July 22, 2016, SGI (REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN)

June's province-wide traffic safety spotlight saw law enforcement issue 74 tickets to new drivers and new motorcycle riders not following the restrictions outlined on their learner or novice licence, including:

- 51 tickets for driving as a learner without a supervising driver
- 21 tickets for failing to comply with a licence endorsement or restriction
- 1 ticket for exceeding the zero tolerance for alcohol or drug use
- 1 ticket for failing to display the proper learner or novice placards on a motorcycle

Law enforcement throughout the province also issued an additional 5,2401 traffic violations to other road users throughout June, including 3,985 speeding/aggressive driving offences, 254 impaired driving-related offences, 302 distracted driving offences (192 of those for cellphone use) and 407 seatbelt/car seat/booster seat violations.

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Top U.S. vehicle safety regulator stands by self-driving cars

July 20, 2016, Reuters Canada (SAN FRANCISCO/WASHINGTON)

The top U.S. auto safety regulator said the government will not abandon efforts to speed the development of self-driving cars, despite a fatal accident involving a Tesla Model S operating on an autopilot system.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration chief Mark Rosekind said at a conference Wednesday the agency is bullish on the potential of autonomous driving technology to reduce the 94 percent of car crashes attributed to human error.

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Kathleen Wynne urges Pokémon Go players to keep their heads up

July 18, 2016, theStar.com (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

Premier Kathleen Wynne is urging users of the popular new game, which has people more glued than ever to their smartphones, to take care.

...Council voted 26-15 last Thursday to ask the province to amend the Highway Traffic Act to prohibit “actively using a hand-held wireless communication device or hand-held electronic entertainment device while on any travelled portion of a roadway.”

But Transportation Minister Steven Del Duca said Friday there is no plan to change the law, noting the city is already has the power to ban texting while walking if it so chooses. Wynne questioned the wisdom of the municipality’s motion Monday.

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Toronto city council approves \$52-million boost for road safety

July 14, 2016, The Globe and Mail (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

Toronto City Council backed a \$52-million boost for road safety over the next five years, beating back an attempt to speed up the plan and in the process calling for a ban on pedestrians using electronic devices while on the road.

The new road-safety plan was approved amid a spate of pedestrian fatalities and barely a week after a senior was killed riding a bicycle. It still needs to survive the city's budgetary process, and finding about 10 per cent of the money will require going cap-in-hand to Ottawa.

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Consumer Reports urges Tesla to disable autopilot feature after deadly crash

July 14, 2016, Global News (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

Consumer Reports magazine has urged electric car maker Tesla to disable its autopilot feature over fears that the self-driving system is not yet sophisticated enough to be used safely by drivers.

The call comes after a crash that killed 40-year-old Joshua Brown in May, when the cameras on his Model S sedan failed to distinguish the white side of a turning tractor-trailer from a brightly lit sky and didn't automatically brake.

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Reducing speed limits quickest way to road safety

July 11, 2016, theStar.com (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

...Expert agencies, such as Toronto Public Health, B.C.'s Provincial Health Office, and the Office of Ontario's Chief Coroner, aren't accepting this macabre equation, stressing instead the preventability of road deaths and injuries. They must muster solid evidence about the role of speed:

- A pedestrian's chances of surviving a crash at 50 km/h are poor and approach nil with higher speeds.
- Speeding is a factor in a significant portion of road deaths and serious injuries.
- A majority of pedestrian (and half of cyclist) deaths in Toronto occur on roads with 60 km/h limits.

This evidence allowed city staff who prepared Toronto's Road Safety Plan to point council in all the right directions: lower speed limits, stepped up enforcement against speeding, and additional school safety zones, along with various engineering and education measures. Lamentably, the implementation timelines, small budget, and localized targets for action translated into a goal to reduce death and injury by only 20 per cent over the next decade, implicitly accepting 400 deaths and 3,500 serious injuries.

Mayor John Tory initially touted the plan until negative public reaction pushed him into an assurance, echoed by public works chair Jaye Robinson, that the safety plan would indeed aim for zero deaths and serious injuries – ostensibly conforming with the international Vision Zero model.

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Distracted driving and speed are most common in teen crashes: study

July 11, 2016, CTV News (WINNIPEG, MANITOBA)

New numbers obtained by CTV news show just how many new drivers in Manitoba are getting into crashes.

According to Manitoba Public Insurance, between 2010 and 2014 there were 23,201 crashes involving teenage drivers.

Of those collisions alcohol was involved in 120, speed was a factor in 1,451 and distracted driving was a factor in 2,578.

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Crash deaths far worse in US than other affluent countries

July 6, 2016, Winnipeg Free Press (NEW YORK)

Traffic deaths are down, but a new report shows fatalities on the road are still a bigger problem in the United States than in other affluent countries.

The U.S. had by far the highest fatality rate for car crashes of the nearly 20 countries studied. The U.S. rate in 2013 was more than twice as high as in most of the other countries.

And traffic deaths haven't been dropping as fast in the U.S. The rate has fallen by nearly a third since 2000. But every other country had a steeper decline

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Cars take deadly toll on pedestrians, cyclists

July 6, 2016, theStar.com (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

The first call to police came just before 2 a.m., and they didn't stop coming for the next 20 hours. As the reports poured in, their locations changed, but their grim theme remained the same: A pedestrian or cyclist had been hit by a car.

Monday, July 4, marked an extraordinarily dangerous day for Toronto's vulnerable road users. In a span of less than 24 hours, there were 18 reported collisions involving 20 pedestrians and cyclists, according to police. Most of the victims escaped serious injury. But one, a 73-year-old man, was killed.

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Abbotsford Police Tweet worst excuses by busted drivers

July 4, 2016, CKNW.com (VANCOUVER, BC)

Summer is always a busy time on the roads, and with the extra traffic comes extra danger. It's something the Abbotsford Police are keenly aware of... and one of the factors behind their hilarious annual Driving Excuses road safety campaign.

Distracted Driver - "I mean really! Define safety!"

Officer - "The opposite of what you were doing."

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New Quebec rules include more space for cyclists, increased fines for dooring

July 3, 2016, CBC News (MONTREAL, QUEBEC)

The Quebec government's promised amendments to the Highway Safety Code are now in effect requiring drivers to stay at least one metre away from bicycles sharing their lane and increasing fines for "dooring" dramatically.

"Dooring" – the common way to describe when someone opens the door of a stopped vehicle without shoulder-checking and hits a passing cyclist – will now cost drivers between \$200 and \$300. That's up from \$30.

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Town hall forums, stats website part of new residential traffic safety strategy

July 2, 2016, Calgary Herald (CALGARY, ALBERTA)

Calgary police will hold town hall forums and create a website of traffic safety statistics as part of a new strategy in response to city council's concerns about residential traffic safety.

In January, council requested that police, city and community stakeholders develop traffic safety enforcement options, focusing on high-risk residential areas, such as school and playground zones as well as "pedestrian-rich" locations.

The strategy was also to use citizen feedback, emphasize public education and public awareness, as well as share traffic enforcement data with city partners.

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Work zone speeders targeted by Saskatchewan police in July blitz

July 1, 2016, Global News (REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN)

With the Saskatchewan summer road construction season in full swing, police will be targeting drivers speeding through work zones.

The Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) July work zone traffic safety blitz will also target aggressive drivers, those ignoring construction signs and illegal passing.

“Road safety is everyone’s responsibility, and drivers need to be extra diligent when there are workers on the road,” said Earl Cameron, the executive vice-president of SGI’s auto fund.

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Canadian Events & Conferences in 2016

Transportation Association of Canada (TAC) Conference and Exhibition
Theme: Efficient Transportation – Managing the Demand
Toronto, Ontario
September 25-28, 2016
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CARSP Conference 2017 –
Theme: Technology in Road Safety
Toronto, Ontario
June 18-21, 2017
[Learn more...](#)