



Canadian Road Safety News Digest

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

For the Period November 1-30, 2017

Surrey creating road safety plan after ‘concerning’ stats from ICBC

November 29, 2017, Cloverdale Reporter (SURREY, BC)

“We feel a shift in focus is necessary given the concerning trends in ICBC data,” said Rosemary Silva, Surrey’s Engineering Communications Manager.

From 2010 to 2015, total collisions per 100,000 population went up 13 per cent in Surrey, according to ICBC.

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Distracted driving technology pilots for British Columbians

November 28, 2017, ICBC (VANCOUVER, BC)

With insurance rates in B.C. under escalating pressure, in part from the rapidly increasing number of crashes occurring on our roads, the provincial government, ICBC and police are launching two pilots to explore how technology can help combat distracted driving in our province.

The first pilot - a partnership between government and ICBC - will include up to 200 customers using phone apps paired with telematics. Telematic technology involves fitting a vehicle with a small device that communicates with an app installed on the driver’s cellphone. The app works to block the use of a handheld device when the in-vehicle technology senses that the vehicle is being driven.

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Toronto looks to fill out road safety budget with crowdfunding

November 28, 2017, Autofocus.ca (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

The City of Toronto is considering supplementing the budget for a new road safety plan with “e-donations” from citizens concerned with the number of injuries and deaths on local streets.

Part of the Vision Zero Road Safety Plan discussions happening at Toronto City Hall late November included using crowdfunding to pay for the program, which is designed to “reduce traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries on Toronto’s streets,” reports blogTO.

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Saskatchewan introduces zero tolerance drug impaired driving rules

November 28, 2017, Global News (REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN)

Saskatchewan has unveiled new legislation that will introduce zero tolerance rules for all drivers impaired by drugs.

This is being done alongside new federal legislation for drug-impaired driving that is expected to take effect in December or January. Anyone charged under these new federal laws will face tough consequences in Saskatchewan.

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'Consequence Strains' ad campaign aims to keep drivers who are high on cannabis off the road

November 27, 2017, Straight.com (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

With legal cannabis on the horizon, it seems politicians, parents, and law enforcement are more concerned than ever with drug-impaired driving.

One advertising agency is highlighting that concern with a marketing campaign that turns cannabis itself into a warning against driving while high.

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MADD Canada founder John Bates fought against impaired driving

November 27, 2017, Globe and Mail (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

It did not take long to stigmatize smoking - perhaps a generation. Similarly, in his lifetime, John Bates saw views about drunk driving shift far from the romantic Dean Martin-ish "one more for the road," attitude, to the point where average citizens know the legal blood alcohol limit.

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New drinking and driving rules bring mandatory alcohol screening to Canada

November 27, 2017, Canadian Lawyer (SCARBOROUGH, ONTARIO)

Supporters of federal rules on alcohol screening say it will help prevent accidents, but critics predict Charter litigation.

In May, the federal government tabled Bill C-46, which would amend the Criminal Code for impaired driving offences. The proposed changes come on the eve of the government's legalization of recreational cannabis use, and they include new "legal limit" drug offences, as well as mandatory alcohol screening.

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Officials wary of spike in impaired drivers across Maritimes

November 26, 2017, CTV News (HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA)

Officials are expressing concerns about the number of impaired drivers charged during the last weekend of November in the Maritimes.

A vehicle was reported to be weaving on the Westmorland Street Bridge in Fredericton on Saturday morning. The vehicle sustained two flat tires and damage to the front end. Police say the vehicle hit a concrete wall a couple of times and the driver will face impaired driving charges

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All drivers need to be truck aware

November 25, 2017, Clearwater Times (CLEARWATER, BC)

Drivers are being urged to take extra precautions around large trucks to reduce crashes that result in a significant number of fatalities each year in British Columbia.

The “Be Truck Aware” campaign, led by an alliance of B.C. road safety stakeholders, coincides with Operation Safe Driver week, a continent-wide initiative in which police and commercial vehicle safety and enforcement (CVSE) officers will be ticketing drivers of both cars and trucks for failing to share the road and follow safe driving practices.

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Cyclists push for a motion to reduce 'dooring' collisions

November 25, 2017, CityNews (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

A motion is set to come before a city committee next week which attempts to address the concerns of cyclists, who say incidents of dooring are on the rise in Toronto.

The Motion to Reduce the Number of “Doorings” in Toronto, will go to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee for consideration on Wednesday morning. In it, the Board of Health outlines a number of recommendations directed towards the city, including writing a letter to the Premier, and Ontario’s Attorney General and Minister of Transportation.

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Rainy nights, deadly streets: Winter months see spike in pedestrian fatalities

November 24, 2017, CBC News (VANCOUVER, BC)

November is one of the worst months for pedestrian fatalities in British Columbia with dark nights, slippery roads and low visibility raising risks.

According to numbers from the B.C. Coroners Service, the winter months see some of the highest rates of pedestrian fatalities. More than 40 per cent of accidents that injure or kill pedestrians occur from October to January.

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Drug-impaired driving bill introduced

November 23, 2017, City View Airdrie (AIRDRIE, ALBERTA)

The Province of Alberta introduced a new bill to deal with impaired driving, including drug-impaired driving, Nov. 14. Bill 29, An Act to Reduce Cannabis and Alcohol-Impaired Driving, is intended to tighten the penalties for anyone caught driving under the influence of cannabis, alcohol or other drugs, according to Minister of Transportation Brian Mason.

“Impaired driving due to alcohol, cannabis or any other impairing drug or combination of drugs, is the leading criminal cause of death and injury in Canada. These tragedies are entirely avoidable,” Mason said during a press conference Nov. 14. “Alberta’s impaired driving laws aim to reduce the number of impaired drivers on our roads, encourage safe driving behaviour and strongly discourage impaired driving.”

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MADD Canada's New Mobile Classroom Teaches Elementary Students about Risks of Alcohol, Drugs and Driving

November 22, 2017, MADD Canada (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

MADD Canada's education program for elementary students is going mobile with SmartWheels, a specially-outfitted recreational vehicle (RV) that will visit elementary schools around the province to educate students about the risks associated with alcohol, drugs and driving.

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Impaired driving numbers are down 18% in Regina so far

November 22, 2017, CBC News (REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN)

The number of impaired driving charges is down in Regina compared to last year, according to a monthly crime statistics report.

There have been 382 charges of impaired driving or exceeding the legal blood alcohol level limit so far in 2017. Last year, there were 468 by the same time – an 18 per cent decrease in impaired charges year-to-date.

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

November 20, 2017, 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 through Manitoba Public Insurance's popular Friends for Life speaker series.

Visiting nearly 40 schools, three keynote speakers will each share their unique and heart wrenching experiences with the goal of changing thinking and ultimately preventing high-risk behaviours in Manitoba's youngest drivers.

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Fines for distracted driving to quadruple: report

November 16, 2017, Montreal Gazette (MONTREAL, QUEBEC)

The Quebec government is considering quadrupling the existing sanctions for using smartphones while in control of a motor vehicle as part of its revision of the Highway Code.

According to a document obtained by Cogeco News, distracted driving fines would increase from \$80-\$100 to \$300-\$400 depending on the severity of the offence.

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Ontario Making It Easier to Stay Safe on the Roads This Winter

November 16, 2017, Government of Ontario (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

With snow already falling in parts of Ontario, the province is making it easier for drivers to stay safe on the roads this winter.

Minister of Transportation Steven Del Duca was at a Canadian Tire in Toronto today, along with Arthur Potts, MPP for Beaches--East York, to remind drivers to plan ahead and to talk about how the province is keeping the roads safe.

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Ontario trucking association releases plan for improved road safety

November 16, 2017, Global News (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

The Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) has released a five-point safety plan, following a number of devastating collisions on the province's highways in recent weeks.

One of the top priorities is curbing distracted and aggressive driving, which will involve a closer look at the role of technology.

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Road safety the focus of 'national day of remembrance' for crash victims

November 15, 2017, Global News (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

Prevention and safety are the primary message being shared by Manitoba Public Insurance in supporting a national Day of Remembrance for road crash victims on Nov. 15.

The initiative launched by the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators is aimed at highlighting losses suffered in collisions that are often preventable.

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Alberta impaired driving laws being revised to respond to pot legalization, court challenge

November 14, 2017, CBC News (EDMONTON ALBERTA)

The Alberta government is proposing updates to its impaired driving laws to comply with a court decision that found indefinite licence suspensions were unconstitutional.

Under Bill 29, introduced in the legislature Tuesday by Transportation Minister Brian Mason, people charged with impaired driving would face a 90-day licence suspension.

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Impaired driving changes could unfairly punish medical cannabis users, lawyers say

November 13, 2017, The Globe and Mail (OTTAWA, ONTARIO)

Canada's proposed overhaul of federal impaired driving rules could unfairly criminalize medical cannabis users, according to an open letter to Ottawa signed by more than 50 criminal defence lawyers.

The letter, which warns that medical marijuana users could be unfairly punished under the proposed system, underscores the challenges to preventing high driving. Experts are divided on just how much THC - the principal psychoactive compound of cannabis - would make someone impaired, and the government is still developing a reliable way to conduct a roadside test.

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Study shows Alberta drivers support traffic laws, but admit to breaking them

November 8, 2017, CTV News (CALGARY, ALBERTA)

A new report released this week shows while Alberta drivers believe that speeding and other poor driving habits are wrong, many admit to breaking the rules on a fairly regular basis.

The study, published by the AMA Foundation for Traffic Safety, says that 82 percent of Albertans feel that speeding is “never acceptable” on residential roads but 52 percent of respondents admit to breaking that law.

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Ontario Creating Opportunity with Cars of the Future New Network Highlights Province as a Global Leader in Autonomous Vehicle Technologies

November 8, 2017, Government of Ontario (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

Ontario is reinforcing its status as a go-to destination for developing automated vehicles by launching AVIN, the Autonomous Vehicle Innovation Network, in Stratford. This unique demonstration zone is among the first of its kind in Canada and will allow researchers to hone the technology and test an AV in a wide range of everyday, real-life traffic scenarios.

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Prioritizing the health and safety of vulnerable road users

November 7, 2017, The Star (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

In the summer of 2012, Sarah Kim was cycling home on Bloor St. when a car door opened to her right, striking her handlebar. The wheel lurched left, launching her from her bike into the next lane. Dazed from the impact, she looked up to see a car approaching, the front fender at the level of her face.

In those next seconds, the hand of death passed her over: the approaching car was moving slow enough that the driver was able swerve into oncoming traffic to avoid running her over, tires screeching as panicked drivers slammed on their brakes. The car following behind the first came to a stop in front of her, a foot from her nose, filling her nostrils with exhaust.

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Victoria targets distracted drivers with hefty penalties

November 6, 2017, Merritt Herald (VICTORIA, BC)

Distracted drivers are facing higher penalties in British Columbia.

The provincial government wants to designate distracted driving as a high-risk behaviour under the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia's driver risk premium program.

That means a driver with two tickets for distracted driving over a three-year period will see their total financial penalties rise to as much as \$2,000, an increase of \$740 over existing penalties.

The changes will take effect March 1.

The government said the penalties are separate from vehicle insurance premiums charged by ICBC and will be levied even if an individual does not own or insure a vehicle.

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Editorial: 'Zombie bill' should be sent back to the grave

November 6, 2017, The Gazette (LONDON, ONTARIO)

If an MPP has his way, using your phone while crossing the road is about to become illegal – but the "zombie bill" misses the mark.

An Ontario MPP is set to propose the "Phones Down, Heads Up Act," which will fine distracted pedestrians up to \$50 for crossing a road while using electronic devices. A subsequent offense would rack up a fine of \$75 and a third would be \$125.

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Repeat distracted drivers to face higher premiums in B.C.

November 6, 2017, CTV News (VANCOUVER, BC)

B.C. is moving to designate distracted driving as a high-risk behaviour and increasing the penalties for those caught on an electronic device behind the wheel.

The change announced Monday means a driver with two distracted driving tickets in a three-year period will see their total financial penalties rise to almost \$2,000—that's \$740 more than the current penalties.

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Legalization of cannabis a worry for MADD

November 5, 2017, The Daily Courier (KELOWNA, BC)

Crashes caused by drivers high on pot are likely to spike after the drug is legalized next summer, MADD Canada says.

American states that have already approved the use of marijuana have seen sharp increases in fatal accidents in which a driver was impaired by the drug, MADD's western region manager for chapter services said Sunday.

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New line of reflective clothing makes pedestrians 'light up like a Christmas tree'

November 5, 2017, Edmonton Journal (EDMONTON, ALBERTA)

November tends to be the most dangerous month of the year for pedestrians. Daylight savings time has just ended and drivers are still adjusting to darker conditions at rush hour. Last year there were 37 pedestrian collisions (fatal and injury) in Edmonton during the month of November, more than twice July's total.

Irene Dixon, the creator of Reflective Advantage – a reflective garments line that launched this week – wants to prevent future collisions by making pedestrians more visible.

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Should automatic braking systems be mandatory for trucks?

November 5, 2017, Owen Sound Sun Times (OWEN SOUND, ONTARIO)

Last week's deadly 14-vehicle Hwy. 400 crash, near Bradford – in which two fuel tanker trucks acted as “bombs on wheels” – has triggered calls for the mandatory installation of emergency braking systems for all new trucks exceeding 3,500 kilograms, as the European Union did in 2012.

“I've seen the system directly and I'm really quite impressed with it,” said Brian Patterson, the president of the Ontario Safety League, who has called for a coroner's inquest into the Hwy. 400 crash which claimed three lives.

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B.C. warns drivers who 'door' cyclists

November 4, 2017, Times Colonist (VICTORIA, BC)

The B.C. government will consider raising fines for drivers who “door” cyclists and setting a safe passing distance as ways to improve road safety.

Transportation Minister Claire Trevena said her ministry is keeping an eye on other jurisdictions to see how well such regulations work there.

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Sask. police target suspended drivers and expired plates in November

November 3, 2017, Regina Leader-Post (REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN)

During November's Traffic Safety Spotlight, Saskatchewan police officers are on the lookout for suspended drivers and expired licence plates.

To help spot those violations, police are using automated licence plate readers (ALPRs). SGI kicked off the traffic spotlight Friday morning with a demonstration of an ALPR. The devices use infrared beams to scan licence plates and check them against a database of stolen vehicles and suspended driver's licences. They can also alert an officer when a vehicle registered to someone under warrant is spotted.

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Horrific Ontario highway crash prompts calls for more safety measures

November 2, 2017, CBC News (TORONTO, ONTARIO)

A horrific and deadly accident on an Ontario highway on Tuesday night is prompting calls for a coroner's inquest and for more action against distracted driving.

The crash north of Toronto on Highway 400 – which involved multiple cars and two fully loaded fuel trucks – claimed three lives and left a scene of fire and twisted metal that one police officer described as "armageddon."

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Longer roadside suspensions in Sask. for impaired drivers transporting kids

November 2, 2017, Global News (REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN)

...The Saskatchewan government introduced legislation Thursday that would give an immediate seven-day driving suspension to drivers who have a blood alcohol content (BAC) of .04 or higher and have a child under the age of 16 in the vehicle.

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Canadian Events & Conferences in 2018

Vision Zero Advocate Conference

Toronto, Ontario
Feb 28-Mar 2, 2018

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CCMTA 2018 Annual Meeting

Quebec City, QC
June 3-6, 2018

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Ontario Road Safety Forum - Third Meeting

Toronto, Ontario
March 6, 2018

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CARSP Conference 2018

Victoria, BC
June 10-13, 2018

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Highway Safety Research Centre – Free Course on Road Safety Fundamentals

Online
March 8 - April 26, 2018

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The 10th International ACM Conference on Automotive User Interfaces and Interactive Vehicular Applications

Toronto, Ontario
September 23-25, 2018

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