

# IMPACT ON INJURIES

## Manitoba's Injury Prevention Newsletter

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### • Young teens should ride in back seat

A study recently published in *Pediatrics* recommends that children up to 15 years of age are at risk of injury from front passenger side air bags and therefore, should travel in the rear seat. This conflicts with the current recommendation that the front seat is safe for children over 12 years of age.

The study looked at the effects of car crashes on some 3,790 children aged 1 month to 18 years of age. As of mid-2004, 150 children aged 11 and under have died from air-bag injuries.

The study suggests that a child's age is a better indicator of risk from air-bag injury than height or weight. Children are not simply just "small adults". Adolescent body changes in muscle mass, bone density and bone-mineral content may explain why young teens are at increased risk from passenger air bags.

The study showed that air bags provide good protection for teens from 15-18 years of age.

### • HIGHWAY TRAFFIC ACT ENHANCES ROAD SAFETY

Starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, the Highway Traffic Act (HTA) has been amended to clamp down on speeders, impaired drivers and other unsafe drivers.

The changes, announced by Transportation and Government Services Minister, Ron Lemieux, include strengthening the penalties for impaired drivers who transport child passengers or commit highway traffic offences that result in death.

The legislation strengthens the consequences when impaired drivers transport child passengers. Now, individuals convicted of impaired driving with a child under the age of 16 in the vehicle face suspensions of five years for a first conviction, 10 years for a second and life for three or more convictions within 10 years.

This legislation is supported by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) Canada, which has identified Manitoba as a national leader in introducing new legislation to deal with drinking and driving.

Crown prosecutors are now instructed to seek higher sentences for impaired drivers with child passengers. As well, there is a protocol for the police to report such incidents to child and family services agencies.

When a highway traffic offence results in a death, the legislation allows a judge to impose a jail sentence of up to two years and removes the limit on the fine the court can impose upon conviction. The driver's license can also be suspended for up to five years.

Other changes to the Highway Traffic Act include requiring vehicles to slow down in construction zones or near stopped emergency vehicles, and prohibiting vehicles from stopping on railway crossings. Failure to slow down while passing a stationary emergency vehicle, or stopping a vehicle on a railway crossing at any time, will each carry set fines

The Highway Traffic Act will also now set fines for speeding in construction zones when workers are present. Offenders will have an additional \$5 added to the base fine for every kilometre recorded over the speed limit.

## • IP Online Information

### Smartrisk Navigator

Smartrisk, one of Canada's leading national injury prevention organizations, operates a website on what is going on in IP across Canada. Their website provides timely information updates, news and other information of interest to injury prevention practitioners and researchers, the media and the general public.

Smartrisk offers a free Navigator Update service where they e-mail a link connecting you to the latest Canadian IP information posted on their website. To subscribe, go to <http://www.smartrisk.ca/Updates.aspx>

Smartrisk also welcomes submissions from all injury prevention stakeholders across Canada.

### Special Needs Transportation Listserv

A new listserv is now available for professionals involved with transporting children with special health care needs. This listserv is based at the National Center for Safe Transportation of Children with Special Health Care Needs, Riley Hospital for Children and the Indiana University School of Medicine. It provides members with a forum to discuss issues related to safe transportation practices, exchange ideas and build partnerships in the field.

Membership is open to health care professionals, child passenger safety technicians, transportation providers and related occupations. To sign up, e-mail [misspenc@iupui.edu](mailto:misspenc@iupui.edu), and put "subscribe special needs transport listserv" in the subject line.

## • The Manitoba Aboriginal Motor Vehicle Injury Picture

"Alcohol is still the leading cause of First Nations automobile crashes in Manitoba," reports Constable Chris Blandford Forensic Traffic Collision Reconstructionist and RSV 2010 Coordinator for RCMP in Manitoba. Cst. Blandford made this comment in response to a recent Globe and Mail article, which showed a decline in alcohol-related collisions in the aboriginal communities in some areas of the country

The Globe & Mail cited the findings of a Calgary Health Region study into First Nations injury risk. When the motor vehicle information statistics are compared with that of Manitoba First Nations, there are some differences and similarities.

The Calgary study did not find that alcohol was a key factor in the motor vehicle crash rates. Road conditions, increased exposure to road travel, poor vehicle maintenance, low use of restraints and lax enforcement were seen as the leading contributing factors.

RCMP data for Manitoba show that the leading cause of First Nations motor vehicle crashes is alcohol use on the part of the driver and/or pedestrians followed by a failure to adjust driving behaviour to changing environmental and/or road conditions and careless driving.

Lack of use of seat belts also contributed significantly to the outcome of these motor vehicle collisions. "When it comes to seat belt use, that article is absolutely right on the money," said Blandford, "We just completed our seat belt surveys and found that the wear rate for First Nations reserves in the southern portion of the province was on average 55% with the lowest being 30%. The rural provincial average is 79%."

When it came to seat belts and Manitoba First Nations motor vehicle fatalities in 2004, seven of the eleven deaths (63%) were unbelted. Seven of the nine MV hospitalizations (78%) were unbelted. 50% of all Manitoba First Nations victims were ejected from their vehicle. The Provincial rural average for fatally injured, unbelted occupants was 60%. The average for MV hospitalizations was 48%.

"The message is clear," said Cst. Blandford, "For all drivers, never drink and drive, drive appropriate to the road and environmental conditions and always use your seat belt."

### • Beach safety pamphlets available

Manitoba Parks and Conservation have a supply of the following beach safety pamphlets available:

- Beach Safety in Manitoba's Provincial Parks
- Beach Safety for Groups in Manitoba's Provincial Parks

If you would like to order a supply for your organizations, contact Jenny Davin, at 945-3839 or e-mail [jdavin@gov.mb.ca](mailto:jdavin@gov.mb.ca).

## • 15-Passenger Van Warning

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announced new research regarding the safety of 15-passenger vans.

Of all 15-passenger vans, 74 per cent had significantly mis-inflated tires. By contrast, only 39 % per cent of passenger cars were found with significant inflation problems. Mis-inflated tires in 15-passenger vans can change handling characteristics, thereby increasing the chance of a rollover crash.

NHTSA recommends that for 15-passenger vans:

- All occupants wear safety belts at all times
- Drivers are trained and experienced
- Tires are checked at least once a week, using the manufacturer's recommended pressure levels
- And no loads are placed on the roof of the vehicle.

For more information, visit

[www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/studies/15passvans/index.htm](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/studies/15passvans/index.htm).

## Consumer Product Safety Program Announces New Toll-Free Number

Health Canada's Consumer Product Safety Program is making it easier for consumers to report a product-related injury or death, or a safety-related issue with a consumer product. The program has launched a new toll-free telephone number available to Canadians.

In the past, consumers calling from outside of the Regional Office calling area were charged long distance fees. The new phone service eliminates these costs with one easy to remember toll-free phone number. Calls will be routed to the closest Regional Office.

To report a product-related injury or death, or a consumer product safety issue, call 1-866-662-0666. This phone number is accessible only in Canada.

## • "Protecting Our Young Workers" April 22<sup>nd</sup>, Brandon Manitoba

"Protecting Our Young Workers" was the theme of a Train the Trainer event held in Brandon on the morning of April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Presented by Judy Fraser of Manitoba Labour: Workplace Safety and Health, the three-hour workshop was attended by over 25 employers, employment facilitators, social service workers and community members.

The morning focused on informing attendees on current legislation and employers' responsibilities. The new "Passport to Safety" program was introduced which is an internet based training tool that allows businesses and organizations to provide safety training to employees.

Each participant received the Safe Work Program resource binder, a video and instruction on how to use this resource during employee safety training. The Brandon and Area Safe Communities Coalition and Career & Employment Youth Services co-organized the event, and felt that this training was very timely and well received. We are confident that such training contributes to our local business community's awareness of safety issues.



### Did you know?

- ♦ New and young workers are at higher risk of being injured on the job
- ♦ 1/3 of injuries occur in the first year of employment (all ages – Alberta)
- ♦ In Manitoba, just under 7000 young workers (15–24years) are injured each year
- ♦ Young workers are more likely to be injured than their experienced counterparts
- ♦ Almost 1 in 10 males aged 20 to 24 will be injured at work seriously enough to lose time (8.8/100)

### Young workers are at increased risk because they:

- Are inexperienced
- Are conditioned to follow adult leadership
- Assume they are safe; believe they are invincible
- Are less concerned about consequences of injury to themselves or their families
- Fear losing their job
- Want to look competent; don't want to "look stupid"....

- Safe Communities, Brandon & Area

## • Government wants input on public health goals

The Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments are consulting with public health stakeholders, experts and concerned citizens with the goal of defining public health goals for Canada. This is an opportunity for health care practitioners, researchers and the public to raise the issue of injury prevention on the public health agenda. At the First Ministers' Meeting in September 2004, the Prime Minister and the Premiers signed a 10-year action plan that will lead to better health care for all Canadians. This plan includes a commitment to establishing health goals to improve the health of Canadians and reduce the pressure on the health care system.

### Injuries in Canada

Injuries are the leading cause of death for Canadians between the ages of 1 and 44 and the fourth leading cause of death overall for Canadians of all ages. In an international comparison of injury deaths (mortality rates) in developed countries, Canada ranked 7th highest for all injuries. An integrated national injury prevention strategy will improve the health of Canadians by supporting them in making positive health choices. SMARTRISK is currently working with stakeholders across Canada to develop such a strategy, which will complement and build upon existing work being done throughout the country. Among other benefits, a national strategy will allow community groups, governments, NGOs and the private sector to integrate their efforts in:

- targeting common risk factors for major injuries;
- recognizing and addressing the relationship between personal choices and social and environmental conditions (e.g., determinants of health);
- consolidating/coordinating promotion and prevention efforts within the settings where people live, learn, work, and play (e.g., home, school, workplace, community, and settings where people seek injury prevention information and/or care);
- mobilizing action and engaging partners across jurisdictions and sectors that impact injury (e.g., transportation).

To voice your support for a national injury prevention, visit <http://www.healthycanadians.ca/>



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