



# SAFETY CANADA

The member newsletter of the Canada Safety Council

## Get Ready for Winter Driving

**D**on't be caught unprepared for the first blast of winter weather. Before the snow flies, have a reputable garage do a tune-up and inspection on your vehicle to prevent problems.

### Tires

Snow tires increase traction in soft snow. Install them on all four wheels. All-season tires on all wheels with good treads are adequate in some regions. Check your tire pressure regularly — for every 5° C of temperature drop, tire pressure goes down by one pound.<sup>1</sup>

### Cooling System

If it hasn't been done in a while, have your cooling system flushed out with a good chemical cleaner and put in fresh anti-freeze. Check containers, belts, hoses, the pressure caps and thermostat.

### Brakes

The brakes must be faultless and equalized so there is no pulling to one side, which may cause skidding.

### Fuel System

Keep your gas tank at least half full. That limits condensation in the tank, so you're less likely to get gas line freezing. Add gasoline antifreeze occasionally.

### Battery and Electrical System

Cold weather is hard on batteries. If your battery is several years old, have it checked. Be sure connections are clean and tight.

### Engine

A diagnostic check-up of the engine can be a good pre-winter investment. If you're due for a tune-up, have it done before winter sets in. Faulty wiring, worn spark plugs, a sticking choke or emission control devices that need attention, can all lead to hard starting.

### Exhaust System

Check the muffler and tail pipe system for carbon monoxide leaks, which can be especially dangerous during cold weather driving when the windows are closed.

### Heaters, Defrosters and Wipers

Have them checked to make sure they are operational. Install winter wiper blades and use cold weather washer fluid. Ensure your windshield can give you clear vision of the road and traffic around you.

### Oil and Filter

Dirty oil can give you trouble in the winter, so change the oil and filter. Check the other filters, including the fuel, air and transmission filters.

### Winter Equipment

The following items should cover most situations:

- windshield scraper and snow brush;
- lightweight shovel;
- bag of sand, wire traction mat or other abrasive substance;
- large box of facial tissues;
- properly inflated spare tire;
- wheel wrench and jack;
- first aid kit;
- flashlight;
- flares;
- battery jumper cables.

For long distance travel, take extra precautions: bring a blanket, candles, lighter or matches, emergency rations, lined winter boots, hat and other warm clothes, and small heating cans.

### Drive Defensively

Winter driving demands extra caution. Always be ready for the unsafe actions of other drivers and for poor driving conditions. Clear the snow and ice from your car, allow more travel time, leave a greater following distance and know how to deal with icy conditions. @



1. Tires which are under-inflated by only eight pounds can reduce gas mileage by five per cent and cut tire life by 25 per cent or more.

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## Salt, Safety and the Environment

**I**f you're under 75 years old, there's never been a time when salt hasn't been used to remove snow and ice from the roadways you've driven on in winter. For most of that time, you've been aware of the trade-off — humans have been protected against collisions, but sensitive roadside vegetation has been damaged and animals have stopped living on roadway rights-of-way, in part perhaps, due to salt.

Over the past half-century, road maintenance departments have placed a high priority on keeping winter roads safe and passable. They have learned how to minimize the amount of salt they use to do it — saving money and reducing (but not eliminating) the environmental impacts. Vehicle owners, too, take

*Continued on page 4...*

## Buckle Up Bears Update

The Co-operators, the Canada Safety Council, the Infant and Toddler Safety Association and community safety groups across Canada, are thrilled with the success of the national expansion of the *Buckle Up Bears* car seat safety program.

Since March 2000, the Infant and Toddler Safety Association has provided car seat inspector training to 144 staff members from The Co-operators and 47 community partners. In 12 communities, The Co-operators staff and their new partners have held 30 clinics and are planning 15 more. A Maritime launch of the program is planned for October, in conjunction with the Nova Scotia Safety Council.

The *Buckle Up Bears* growth chart offers clear, helpful information on car seat safety. Its distribution has been expanded through cooperation with the Ontario Hospital Association and the Canadian Public Health Association. Day care centres insured by The Co-operators receive the growth charts to give their clients upon renewal.

*Buckle Up Bears* is a corporate and community partnership aimed at raising awareness of correct installation and use of car seats for children. Its goal is to improve the alarmingly low rate of proper child restraint in Canada.

For information on the program contact Dominique O'Rourke at The Co-operators (1-800-265-2612). @

## SAFETY CANADA

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President: Emile-J. Therien

Editor: Ethel Archard (ext. 228)

Canada Safety Council

1020 Thomas Spratt Place

Ottawa, ON K1G 5L5

Telephone: (613) 739-1535

Fax: (613) 739-1566

E-mail: [csc@safety-council.org](mailto:csc@safety-council.org)

Web site: [www.safety-council.org](http://www.safety-council.org)

Charitable BN: 11882 8565 RR 0001

## THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Aggressive dogs are a growing safety concern in many communities. Vicious dogs owned by drug dealers, criminal groups, and violent or irresponsible individuals pose a threat to public safety. An aggressive dog can endanger life by blocking emergency responders from a fire, medical emergency or other urgent situation.

European countries have started to enact laws to control dangerous dogs. Similarly, Canada must analyse the extent and nature of the problem in this country, and put into place measures to prevent deaths and injuries from dog attacks.

After a six year-old Hamburg boy was bitten to death by a pit bull in his schoolyard, Germany's states all tightened laws governing the keeping of animals (this was the third dog attack death in six months in that country). Hamburg, a city-state, enacted the toughest laws, outlawing three of the most dangerous breeds.

Denmark outlawed three breeds in 1991. Tourists are not allowed to bring those animals into the country; and any dog can be declared illegal if it is proven to have been trained to be aggressive. Sweden has similarly tough laws. In Britain, the import and breeding of dangerous dogs is illegal. In France, a law that took effect in January requires dangerous dogs to be sterilized. Italy is planning to introduce a similar law this year.

In Canada, animal control is largely a municipal responsibility; by-laws can deal with dangerous dogs. Import of animals, medical costs of treating bite injuries and collection of national injury data are federal matters.

There is no reliable information on the canine population of Canada, how many Canadians are being killed and seriously injured by dogs (and the circumstances), or whether particular breeds cause a disproportionate number of deaths and serious injuries.

Based on the European experience, a reliable database must be established detailing the number of those dogs, the laws in place, if any, affecting their breeding and ownership, and the number of persons killed or injured by them. Only then can it be determined if more or new laws are required to control the ownership and breeding of these dogs in Canada.

Canadian legislators may or may not decide to focus on breeds as the Europeans have done. Other approaches must also be considered: education of owners and the public, especially parents of young children; municipal animal control regulations with vigorous enforcement; and mandatory reporting of bites, including ownership, breed, spay/neuter status, history of aggression, and restraint at the time of the incident.

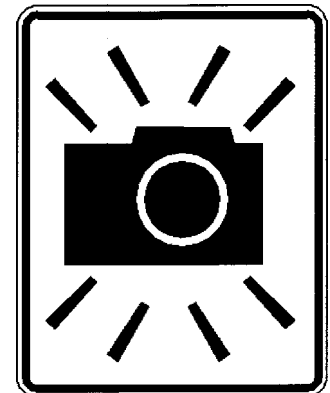
The bottom line is that the extent and nature of dog attacks must be analysed, and appropriate measures put into place to protect the public.

*Emile Therien*

## Sign of the Times

The National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control has developed a standard Photo Enforcement sign. The sign may be used to indicate the presence of photo enforcement of all types including red light camera, photo radar, reserved lane camera and other types of photo enforcement.

It may be installed on the approaches to a crossing or along a corridor where photo enforcement may be present. The City of Edmonton has tested a similar version of the sign, and it is used in municipalities throughout Alberta. The sign has been submitted for final approval this fall, for inclusion in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Canada.



# Intersection

## Police Officers Honored for Outstanding Traffic Safety Initiatives

The National Police Award for Traffic Safety was created in 1991 by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP), Transport Canada and the Canada Safety Council. Its purpose is to honor front-line Canadian police officers committed to making our roads safer. In the past, their efforts went unnoticed and the ability to share strategies was limited.

This year's recipients were honored on August 29 at the CACP conference in Saint John, New Brunswick.



### Year 2000 Winner

#### Alberta RCMP Officer Examines Rural Seat-belt Use

When Staff Sergeant Steve MacDonald, the provincial traffic supervisor for the RCMP "K" Division in Edmonton, Alberta, recognized that half of the vehicle occupants killed in collisions on RCMP patrolled highways in Alberta were unbelted, he determined to find a solution.

Major urban-based seat-belt surveys showed that 90 per cent of Albertans were buckling up. Staff Sergeant MacDonald recognized, however, that 80 per cent of Alberta's fatal crashes were on the province's rural highways and saw a need for a survey specific to these areas.

He developed partnerships with a broad base of stakeholders and set a goal: to measure the seat-belt usage rate in rural Alberta communities of under 25,000, and to use the results as baseline data for a strategy to reduce deaths and injuries resulting from non-use of seat-belts. The methodology was established, and detailed manuals were developed for monitors at the observation sites.

Analysis of province-wide monitoring by 1,600 volunteers from June 21 to 25, 1999, found the rural seat-belt wearing rate in Alberta to be only 69 per cent. Armed with these results, the RCMP in Alberta are implementing a strategy to raise the seat-belt wearing rates in rural Alberta to 95 per cent by 2010.

### Honorable Mentions

#### Ontario Officer Mobilizes Community to "Reduce the Risk"

In early 1999, the Town of LaSalle, Ontario, experienced its second pedestrian fatality in less than two years. Two promising high school students, each walking at night on the sides of roadways with no sidewalks and no streetlights, were struck by motor vehicles and killed. The grieving community sought ways to prevent such tragedies from happening again.

In response, Constable Duncan Davies of the LaSalle Police Service developed a community-based traffic safety program, *Reduce the Risk*. Reflective armbands were distributed to 6,500 elementary and secondary school students, and sold to the public at minimal cost. A broad-based awareness campaign, with facilitator's guide and video, won strong support from the community, local media and schools.

For participating in the program, one supporter was named the 1999 Citizen of the Year in Malden, and a student was recognized as the Young Citizen of the Year.

#### Peel Officers and Court Staff Target Licence Suspensions

In 1999, Peel Regional Police Traffic Services undertook to reduce the number of suspended drivers who continued to drive. Specifically targeted were drivers whose licences were suspended for impaired driving.

Officers from the Peel Regional Police Breathalyzer unit teamed up with members of the Police Court Bureau staff to identify from criminal court dockets those individuals who could receive a provincial or criminal driving suspension that day. One plainclothes Court Liaison officer and one plainclothes Traffic Services officer monitored the courtrooms.

Offenders who received a driving suspension were followed out of the courtroom. About 14 per cent of them ignored their sentence and drove away from the court building. Traffic Services uniformed officers immediately apprehended and charged them. As a result of television coverage, other police services have started similar programs.

#### Quebec Officer Leads in Fight Against Drunk Driving

The large Beauce-Etchemin region south of Quebec City has a population just over 100,000. Data from the *Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec* and the Coroner's Office showed that region had the highest percentage of drunk driver fatalities in the province — 58 per cent, compared to 43 per cent for all of Quebec. In 1997, 35 per cent (11) of all fatal collisions in Beauce-Etchemin were directly caused by drunk driving.

*Continued on page 6...*

## Crime and Punishment

Impaired driving is the leading criminal cause of death in Canada. Every year almost 1,100 road users are killed and 3,600 seriously injured in crashes involving drinking drivers. One-third of all drivers killed are impaired by alcohol.

Anyone convicted of driving with a Blood Alcohol Concentration of 80 mg per cent or higher will have a criminal record for life, whether or not the offender is involved in a collision.

In June 1999, tougher penalties were prescribed for impaired driving under the Criminal Code of Canada. The minimum penalties for a first-time impaired driving conviction were increased to a \$600 fine (from \$300) and a one year driving suspension (from three months). The driving suspension for a second offense was quadrupled, from six months to two years. In June 2000, the maximum penalty for impaired driving causing death was increased from 14 years to life imprisonment.

*Continued on page 4...*

...Salt, from page 1.

measures by rust-proofing their vehicles against the effects of the salt used to de-ice slippery roads.

On August 12, after five years of study, Environment Canada announced its recommendation that road salts be declared "toxic" to plants and animals. The public has until October 11 to tell Environment Canada what it thinks.

For safety advocates, this is not an easy call. Canadians want to protect the environment *and* keep the roads safe and passable.

Labeling road salts as "toxic" could discourage their use to ensure safe driving conditions. By jeopardizing public safety, such action at the federal level would increase municipal and provincial liability.

If road salts are toxic, should they be replaced with alternative de-icing substances? Salt costs \$50-\$65/ton, the alternatives \$600-\$2,000/ton. Given the current focus on reducing taxes, it seems unrealistically expensive to replace road salts at this time.

The report seems to apply the same standard to both the natural environment and the engineered roadway drainage system. Bridges and roadway rights of ways are engineered with drainage ditches and runoff impoundments to manage the high-chloride runoff and *prevent* environmental contamination while providing public safety. Yet the report says these ditches and impoundments should not only be

**Canadians want to protect the environment *and* keep the roads safe and passable.**

protected *against* chlorides, but should serve as replacement "habitat" in urban areas.

Salt-tolerant species of plants now thrive along the roadways where more salt-sensitive native species once grew. The report identifies this displacement as a problem. However, the native vegetation was destroyed when the roadway itself was built. Landscaping plans for Canadian highways select salt-tolerant species specifically so they can co-exist in the harsher roadway environment.

Public works departments are well aware of the adverse environmental effects of de-icing. Once a problem is identified, the highway design is often re-engineered or winter maintenance practices changed to correct it. The Transportation Association of Canada, whose members include road maintenance agencies, has a 275-page Salt Management Guide, Primer and Codes of Practice to address key issues relating to road salting.

In requesting the assessment, the Expert Advisory Panel recognized the need for de-icing agents to keep roadways open and safe during the winter, and to minimize traffic crashes, injuries and mortality under icy and snowy conditions. It stressed that measures developed as a result of the assessment must never compromise human safety.

Safety and environment do not need to be trade-offs. We can (and should) insist on both. @

...Punishment, from page 3.

Quebec Transport Minister Guy Chevrette objected to the longer minimum suspensions. He said that offenders will break the ban and drive anyway; a 1996 study found that 3/4 of Quebecers with suspended licenses still drove. Before the amendments, Quebec allowed second-time offenders to drive again after the minimum six-month suspension on condition that they equip their cars for 18 months with an ignition-interlock device. The success of this measure may be compromised by the longer minimum suspensions.

Will the more severe sentences prevent offenders from continuing to drive impaired? A common characteristic

of many hard core drinking drivers is that they are not deterred by the threat of punishment. Research shows that long imprisonment without other remediation produces either no significant impact, or a higher number of future incidents and convictions. Very brief incarceration, however, appears to reduce recidivism with first-time offenders.

On the other hand, the law has also been strengthened to give police new tools to keep impaired drivers off the road. Research shows that if people believe they will be caught, they are far less likely to offend. Tougher sentences have yet to show their value — but visible, effective enforcement is a proven tool in the fight against impaired driving. @

## BC's Indefinite Licence Suspension Program

British Columbia drivers who receive motor vehicle related Criminal Code convictions face mandatory driver's licence suspensions under the province's Indefinite Licence Suspension (ILS) program.

The ILS program is based on a "three strikes and you're out" model. Drivers convicted of offences such as impaired driving or dangerous driving receive escalating suspensions. A first conviction results in an automatic one-year driver's licence suspension.

A second conviction within ten years leads to an automatic three-year suspension. A driver who receives a third conviction within ten years of an earlier conviction receives an indefinite suspension. An indefinite licence suspension may not be terminated for at least 10 years, and then only if the person successfully completes a remediation program to address the alcohol or other problems that led to the convictions. The BC government is currently developing remediation programs.

With the ILS legislation nearing its third anniversary, just over 11,000 ILS program suspensions have already been issued, more than 9,000 of them for one year, 1,700 for three years and close to 500 for an indefinite period.

This summer, BC's driver licensing systems were updated to make ILS even more effective. With the improvements, police computer systems automatically provide up-to-date information on the status of drivers whose licences have been suspended. This will make it easier for police to enforce ILS program suspensions and to make sure suspended drivers stay off the road. Over time, this is expected to reduce the number of British Columbia families affected by the tragedy of needless death and injury. @

Use a block heater when the temperature drops to -20C (-4°F) or below. A block heater keeps your engine oil and coolant warm, which makes the vehicle easier to start and can increase winter fuel economy by as much as 10 per cent. Use a timer to switch on the block heater one or two hours before you plan to drive.

## Public Platform

# Elmer Program Expands

With Liberty Mutual as sponsor, Elmer the Safety Elephant® has been very busy lately.

Over the past few months, he has appeared from Vancouver to Newfoundland. The large, lovable mascot has been at numerous police and fire safety events, in parades, at bike rodeos and even in the Easter Seals Skate with the Leafs (a charity event of the Toronto Maple Leafs).

More than one million booklets, posters and pamphlets have been distributed to children across the country. In November, the Canada Safety Council's National Community Safety and Crime Prevention Campaign featured an Elmer poster contest.

This fall, expect to see Elmer at traffic safety conferences and in school bus safety campaigns. You can invite him to a community event, by contacting Arlene Healy at Liberty Mutual, 1-800-268-6418, ext. 2720, or your local Liberty Mutual office.

For National School Safety Week (October 17 to 23), Elmer is hosting another poster contest for the primary grades. Children are being asked to create a poster on pedestrian safety. Among children ages five to nine, more than 20 per cent of injury-related deaths involve pedestrians.

An exciting new flag program promotes Elmer's traffic safety rules. A kit and administration guide have been designed for use by police officers in schools. Each participating school will get a flag, children will receive a pamphlet and poster to bring home with them, and there are resources for teachers.

For details about the flag program, contact Jack Smith at the Canada Safety Council, (613) 739-1535, ext. 225. @

### Elmer's Seven Traffic Safety Rules

1. Look all ways before you cross the street.
2. Keep away from parked cars.
3. Ride your bike safely — obey signs and signals.
4. Play in a safe place away from the street.
5. Walk when you cross the street.
6. Where there is no sidewalk, walk on the left, facing traffic.
7. Always wear your seat-belt in the car.



*Elmer the Safety Elephant is a registered trademark of the Canada Safety Council.*

### Kwiz Korner

Do you remember what you read in *Safety Canada* in the past year?

1. What is the second leading cause of injury death in Canadian youths aged 10 to 19?  
A. Drowning. B. Suicide.  
C. Poisoning. D. Vehicle crashes.
2. What percentage of all car seats inspected during the 1999 pilot of the *Buckle Up Bears* car seat clinics were acceptable and properly installed?  
A. 12 per cent B. 44 per cent  
C. 68 per cent D. 91 per cent
3. What is the ratio of traffic fatalities to homicides in Canada?  
A. 1:1 B. 2:1 C. 1:3 D: 5:1
4. What proportion of traffic casualties in Canada are youth aged 15 to 19?  
A. One of every four.  
B. One of every eight.  
C. One of every 12.  
D. One of every 20.
5. How many Americans are bitten by dogs every year?  
A. 823,000. B. 2.5 million.  
C. 4.7 million. D. 11.2 million.

*Answers on page 6.*

### Protecting Hockey Spectators

Flying pucks have caused serious injuries to spectators in hockey arenas across the country.

Fans can incur head and face injuries if shots deflect into the stands. In March 2000, a Manitoba man died as a result of being hit in the head with a puck while watching a hockey game in his local arena. Injuries occur in local arenas across Canada and this problem is even recognized to exist in Maple Leaf Gardens.

The absence of a national standard makes it difficult for the agencies responsible for these facilities to make decisions on how best to protect spectators.

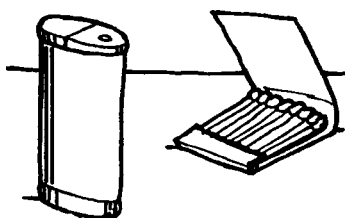
With the possibility of federal infrastructure funding being made available to upgrade such recreational facilities, the Canada Safety Council has asked the federal government to fund the development of a national standard for spectator protection for hockey rinks. @

## Lighters

In 1994 the U.S. government required that all cigarette lighters be made child-resistant. Since that ruling, fire deaths among children have dropped by half. Last year, fires killed 125 children in the U.S. and injured another 800. The National Fire Protection Association says that is half the number killed or injured five years ago.

Canada amended its Hazardous Products Regulations in 1995 to include child-resistance requirements as well as safety performance requirements for cigarette lighters. Prior to the amendment, child-play fires involving cigarette lighters were responsible for an average of eight deaths a year. Health Canada estimates there are now only two such deaths annually. The regulations are being amended to include multi-purpose lighters.

The Europeans use a voluntary ISO standard that covers safety performance requirements for cigarette lighters, but have been experiencing problems with Chinese-made lighters. The European Union has no mandatory child-resistance requirements. @



...Police Award, from page 3.

Sergeant Robert Verge of the Sûreté du Québec was nominated for his work as a member of the Consultation Committee which developed an action plan involving many partners. The project benefitted from excellent co-operation with the Sûreté du Québec through his work.

Target groups included: students, people who consume alcohol while driving, owners of licensed premises where alcoholic beverages are served, organizers of events and festivals, and municipal authorities. The Committee set objectives for each target group, with detailed action plans. @

## Clothing Burns

Clothing can burn relatively quickly when it comes into contact with an ignition source. It covers a large area of the body, so if it ignites and burns, severe injuries usually result. Clothing burns can often be fatal because of their severity.

Young children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable to severe burns. They often do not recognize the danger; and if their clothing catches fire they are less able to defend themselves.

Flammability regulations for textile products, passed under the Hazardous Products Act in the early 1970s, removed the most hazardously flammable fabrics from the market. During the 1970s and 1980s, children's sleepwear was identified in a significant number of fire deaths and injuries. Regulations on the flammability of children's sleepwear up to size 14X were strengthened in 1987. Sleepwear should be made of nylon or polyester. Cotton and cotton-blend fabrics will catch fire and burn more quickly than most synthetics. Since the regulations were strengthened, no deaths have been reported.

Ordinary, everyday articles of clothing of normal flammability are usually involved in burn injuries. For children, playing with matches, lighters or stoves is the main cause of clothing burns. Women's clothing most often ignites in the course of routine daily activities such as cooking. For youths and men, mishandling of flammable liquids plays a key role.

The fabric of which a garment is made determines how easily it will ignite, the rate at which the flame will spread and how easy it will be to extinguish the flame. Textile fibres vary widely in their burning characteristics:

1. Fibres that ignite easily, burn rapidly and are difficult to extinguish include cotton, linen, rayon, cellulose acetate and acrylics.
2. Fibres which are difficult to ignite, burn slowly and tend to melt include nylon, polyester, polypropylene and spandex.
3. Fibres which will not continue to burn once the ignition source is

removed include modacrylics (e.g. Verel, Dynel), Saran and Cordelan.

4. Fibres which are difficult to ignite and tend to self-extinguish include wool and silk.

The design of the garment will also affect its flammability. Loose, flowing garments with wide sleeves, skirts or ruffles can contact ignitions sources more readily and will burn more rapidly once ignited. Close-fitting garments with cuffs and fitted waists are less likely to contact ignition sources and will burn more slowly. Folds or creases will accelerate the flames, while belts slow the spread of flame.

Choosing fibres and styles that retard burning is an effective way to reduce clothing-related burn injuries, especially in vulnerable age groups. Pants and polo pyjamas, for example, present a lower fire hazard than dresses and nightgowns.

Basic fire safety precautions will prevent clothing from igniting in the first place. Keep matches and lighters away from children, don't let them play around stoves and heating appliances, and be careful when using flammable liquids or household cooking appliances. If clothing catches fire, the best advice is to "stop, drop and roll." @

### Answers to Kwiz Korner

1. **B.** Suicide is second to motor vehicle crashes. Unlike other fatalities in this age group, the suicide rate has remained steady or increased slightly over the last 15 years. (October, 1999)
2. **A.** Only 12 per cent of the car seats were acceptable. This shows how dangerously low the rate of proper child restraint is in Canada. (July, 2000)
3. **D.** In 1997 there were 3,064 traffic fatalities and 581 homicides. (July, 1999)
4. **B.** Despite a 61 per cent drop in teen fatalities since 1980, road crashes are still the leading cause of death in the 15 to 19 age group. (April, 2000)
5. **C.** This represents almost two per cent of the American population. (July, 1999)

## On the Job

# Bullying in the Workplace

Employers are beginning to take steps to make bullying as unthinkable as sexual harassment or drunkenness in the workplace.

Schoolyard bullying — the torment of one child by another — is often compared to workplace bullying. Both types represent a grab for control by an insecure, inadequate person, an exercise of power through the humiliation of the target. School bullies, if reinforced by cheering classmates, fearful teachers or ignoring administrators, grow up to be dominating adults. When they join the work force, they continue to bully others.

### Psychological Violence

A 1999 International Labour Organization (ILO) report on workplace violence emphasized that physical and emotional violence is one of the most serious problems facing the workplace in the new millennium. The ILO definition of workplace violence includes bullying:

“Any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work. These behaviors would originate from customers, co-workers at any level of the organization. This definition would include all forms of harassment, *bullying*, intimidation, physical threats/assaults, robbery and other intrusive behaviors.”

CUPE’s National Health and Safety Survey of Aggression Against Staff, published in January, 1994, mentions verbal aggression and harassment in its definition of violence:

“Any incident in which an employee is abused, threatened or assaulted during the course of his/her employment. This includes the application of force, threats with or without weapons, severe verbal abuse and persistent sexual and racial harassment.”

Bullying (general harassment) is far more prevalent than other destructive behaviors covered by legislation, such as sexual harassment and racial discrimination.

A Canadian survey on workplace violence found that physical violence is often reported from outside sources, such as customers, students and patients. Psychological violence is more often reported from within the organization. A U.S. study estimates 1 in 5 American workers has experienced destructive bullying in the past year.

### Workplace Policies Needed

On April 6, 1999, a former employee of OC Transpo in Ottawa went on a shooting rampage that left four employees dead, then took his own life. The killer had himself been the victim of workplace harassment.

Among the recommendations of a coroner’s inquest was that the definition of workplace violence should include not only physical violence but also psychological violence such as bullying, mobbing, teasing, ridicule or any other act or words that could psychologically hurt or isolate a person in the workplace.

### Bullies poison their work environment

No jurisdiction in Canada requires employers to have a workplace violence prevention program. For that reason, the OC Transpo jury recommended that federal and provincial governments enact legislation to prevent workplace violence and that employers develop policies to address violence and harassment.

### Perpetrators and Targets

Over 80 per cent of bullies are bosses, some are co-workers and a minority bully higher-ups. A bully is equally likely to be a man or a woman.

The common stereotype of a bullied person is someone who is weak, an oddball or a loner. On the contrary, the target chosen by an adult bully will very often be a capable, dedicated staff member, well liked by co-workers.

Bullies are most likely to pick on people with an ability to cooperate and a non-confrontative interpersonal style. The bully considers the target’s capability a threat, and determines to cut them down.

### Profile of a Bully

Adult bullies, like their schoolyard counterparts, tend to be insecure people with poor or non-existent social skills and little empathy. They turn this insecurity outwards, finding satisfaction in their ability to attack and diminish the capable people around them.



A workplace bully subjects the target to unjustified criticism and trivial fault-finding. In addition, he or she humiliates the target, especially in front of others, and ignores, overrules, isolates and excludes the target.

If the bully is the target’s superior, he or she may: set the target up for failure by setting unrealistic goals or deadlines, or denying necessary information and resources; either overload the target with work or take all work away (sometimes replacing proper work with demeaning jobs); or increase responsibility while removing authority.

Regardless of specific tactics, the intimidation is driven by the bully’s need to control others.

### The Burden of Bullying

Bullied employees waste between 10 and 52 per cent of their time at work. Research shows they spend time defending themselves and networking for support, thinking about the situation, being demotivated and stressed, not to mention taking sick leave due to stress-related illnesses.

Bullies poison their work environment with low morale, fear,

*Continued on page 8...*

...Bullies, from page 7.

anger, and depression. The employer pays for this in lost efficiency, absenteeism, high staff turnover, severance packages and law suits. In extreme cases, a violent incident may be the tragic outcome.

The target's family and friends also suffer the results of daily stress and eventual breakdown. Marriages suffer or are destroyed under the pressure of the target's anxiety and anger. Friendships cool because the bullied employee becomes obsessive about the situation.

Moreover, our health care system ends up repairing the damage — visits to the doctor for symptoms of stress, prescriptions for antidepressants, and long term counseling or psychiatric care. In this sense, we all pay.

### Prevention

Workplace bullies create a tremendous liability for the employer by causing stress-related health and safety problems, and driving good employees out of the organization.

The business case for strict anti-bullying policies is compelling. Potential benefits include a more peaceful and productive workplace, with better decision making, less time lost to sick leave or self-defensive paperwork, higher staff retention, and a lower risk of legal action.

Identify bullying in your staff handbook as unacceptable behavior. Establish proper systems for investigating, recording and dealing with conflict. Investigate complaints quickly, while maintaining discretion and confidentiality and protecting the rights of all individuals involved. It is important to understand fully any incidence of bullying and take the problem seriously at all levels.

Organizations who manage people well outperform those who don't by 30 to 40 per cent. Development of strong interpersonal skills at all levels is fundamental to good management and a healthy workplace.

There is no place for bullies in a well-run organization. @

### Did you know?

According to a report in the July issue of the Archives of Physical Medicine, many people don't bend their knees when lifting because it takes more energy. In a study involving 20 healthy volunteers, heart rates went up more when they raised and lowered a box by squatting compared to bending over from the waist. The extra energy required to lift safely could explain why people risk back strain by lifting with straight legs. About 80 percent of adults are pained by lower back problems at some point. Bending knees and keeping the back straight when lifting is worth the extra effort to avoid the pain, say experts. *WorldSafety.com News, July 26, 2000*

The rise in popularity of platform shoes has resulted in an increase in associated injuries. Of the 56 cases identified in the CHIRPP database in the last 4 years, all involved females and almost 80 per cent were between the ages of 9 and 19 years. Over one-third of the injuries were serious enough to require medical follow-up. The circumstances usually involved "falling off" or "turning over on" the shoes while running, walking, or playing sports. Almost half (47.3 per cent) of the injuries were sprains or strains of the ankle or foot, and 27.3 per cent were fractures of the foot or lower leg. *CHIRPP News, Issue 18, June 2000*

New York is the first U.S. state to legislate "fire-safe cigarettes." The new law requires that all cigarettes sold in the state meet the new fire safety standards no later than July 1, 2003, giving cigarette manufacturers three years to comply. The cigarettes must stop burning within a specified time period if not smoked and they must meet tougher standards to keep lit cigarettes from setting furniture on fire. The package also includes tougher enforcement provisions to fight cigarette bootlegging. Every year 1,000 Americans die in fire deaths caused by cigarettes that are not extinguished. *Yahoo! News, June 15, 2000*

Spain ranks first for organ donations at 31.5 per million population, and the U.S. is a distant second at 22.7. Canada's organ donation rate is only 13.7. The low rate is not due to a lack of consent, but to fewer automobile crashes and better health care. Our motor vehicle fatality rate is 50 per cent that of Spain and the U.S. The Americans have 3 ½ as many gun-related deaths, and Canadians are less likely than Spaniards to die of strokes and aneurysms due to prevention and better care. With demand for transplants expected to double over the next five years, health officials are working to increase organ donations. *Globe and Mail, June 21, 2000*

Environment Canada is halfway through a \$37 million upgrade of a national weather radar system which will help detect and track violent tornados like the one that tore through Pine Lake, Alberta on July 14, 2000. By 2003 or 2004 the country will have coast-to-coast coverage of the most populated areas. The development and behaviour of severe weather is so complex that it is the last frontier of meteorology. *Edmonton Journal, July 19, 2000*

The 1999 DesRosiers Light Vehicle Study found that female respondents drove slightly more kilometres in 1998 than their male counterparts (20,983 compared to 20,762). Females have certain types of repair and maintenance work performed on their vehicles less often than men, for example: replacement of muffler systems, oil changes, air filter replacement, sparkplug replacement and transmission repair/replacement. The study attributes this to less familiarity with the technology and mechanics of cars, and suggests a contributing factor may be that women tend to drive more defensively, exacting less wear and tear on the vehicle. *Aftermarket Watch, Volume 14, Issue 2, 2000, Automotive Industries Association of Canada*

A study by the British Columbia Cancer Agency found that children who use sunscreen develop fewer moles and can have a lower cancer risk later in life. The three year study of 309 Vancouver children in Grades 1 to 4 found that freckle-faced children who regularly received the correct application of sunscreen developed 30 to 40 per cent fewer moles than freckled children in the control group. Up to half of all cancerous moles arise from pre-existing moles. The study concluded that, especially for freckled children, there is a good chance of reducing children's risk of melanoma by using sunscreen. *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), Vol. 283, No. 22, June 14, 2000*

A study by the National Search and Rescue Secretariat identified problems and issues surrounding search and rescue (SAR) on land. It found that the fastest growing group of lost people is Alzheimer's and other mentally affected persons. Search and rescue is seeing the results of increased risk-taking by the "macho" segment of Canadian society. Although skilled volunteers form the single largest provider of ground SAR, they are not protected by Workers' Compensation in some provinces. *Media Advisory, National Search and Rescue Secretariat, June 6, 2000*