



# SAFETY CANADA

The member newsletter of the Canada Safety Council

## Do We Need Laws Against Cell Phones?

**W**ireless phones are everywhere. Businesses depend on them. Family members call each other to keep in touch. People use them in public places and when driving.

The down side is that all those beeping noises and loud conversations are downright annoying, and drivers who pay more attention to the phone than the traffic create a hazard to other drivers. Do we need new regulations to protect the public from these problems?

### Do Cell Phones Cause Collisions?

As more drivers use wireless phones, there are more collisions where an at-fault driver was on the phone. Today, drivers have a very high exposure to cell phones.

Concerns that use of wireless phones can cause collisions have led to calls to ban or regulate their use in cars. Advocates cite a 1997 article in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. That report made no claim to prove the devices caused collisions. Moreover, it had several shortcomings. For example:

- The sample group was small and biased: 699 Toronto drivers, all of whom had a cell phone and all of whom had been in a collision. In contrast, findings of a Université de Montréal study released in February 2001 were from a random survey of 36,000 drivers.

- The data were from 1994-95. Since then, exposure has skyrocketed. The number of wireless subscribers in Canada quintupled, from 1.8 million at the end of 1994 to nine million by March 2001, while licensed drivers rose by 10 per cent and vehicles by only three per cent.
- The design was flawed. It was based on a model which associated an episode of heavy exercise with an increased risk of heart attacks in middle-aged people. Intermittent use of a device cannot be compared to the functioning of a vital organ.
- Some of its assumptions were wrong. For example, it stated that young urban professionals can be expected to have very low collision rates and very safe driving patterns. The opposite is true; younger drivers have more collisions and tend to be more likely to take risks.

If a driver talking on the phone drives through a red light or misses a stop sign, the driver — not the phone — is at fault.

### Enforce Existing Laws

Careless driving laws are already in place to prosecute drivers who do not make the driving task their top priority when using a wireless phone. For example, Ontario drivers caught talking on cell phones, eating, reading or applying makeup are subject to a \$325 fine and six demerit points. Similar penalties apply in other provinces including Quebec.

A mobile phone ban would undoubtedly be flouted. In addition, regulation could negate the safety benefits of having a phone in the car.

When you're stuck in traffic, calling to say you'll be late can reduce stress and make you less inclined to drive aggressively to make up lost time. There are over three million 911 calls per year from mobile phones to report emergencies and dangerous situations. Indeed, many people want a cell phone in their vehicle specifically for safety reasons.

The Canada Safety Council sees a need for more public awareness and education, and strict enforcement of the existing laws. Tips for drivers with cell phones appear on CSC's Web site and in its defensive driving courses.

### Distractions and Multitasking

The inappropriate use of cell phones by drivers is part of a serious traffic safety problem — distractions can be dangerous behind the wheel.

A study released by the American Automobile Association in May 2001 reported that distracted drivers account for about nine per cent of serious crashes. Of that number, 1.5 per cent were using or dialing a cell phone at the time of the



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## Visit Our New Sites!

[www.safety-council.org](http://www.safety-council.org) & [www.elmer.ca](http://www.elmer.ca)

The Canada Safety Council has renovated its corporate Web site and its Elmer the Safety Elephant site.

The corporate site now has a sharp new design, with a search function to make it easier to find the information you are seeking. The Elmer site, sponsored by Liberty Mutual, is completely new — with animation, games, activities and downloads for kids. Δ

## THE PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Good legislation addresses clearly identified problems, is based on scientific evidence and — very importantly — can be enforced.

Laws, regulations and enforcement are critical to prevent deaths and injuries. The Hazardous Products Act, labor legislation, laws against impaired driving, mandatory seat-belt use and many other regulations have played a major role in improving safety.

Perhaps because of the success of these laws, more and stricter rules and restrictions are demanded in the name of safety. Ban cell phones. Lower the BAC in the Criminal Code. Require muzzles for all dogs.

It is true that cell phones can be a dangerous distraction, too many people are killed by impaired drivers, and dog bites cause serious injuries. However, recent demands for legislation seem to be a knee-jerk reaction, with little analysis of the problem in its overall context, and little real research. Strict enforcement of existing laws is not considered. Calling for new regulations has become a panacea.

Canadians concerned about safety must look at alternatives to making more laws. Enforce existing laws. Invest in training and public education to achieve voluntary compliance. If a small core of chronic offenders is causing most of the harm, target that group with specific countermeasures.

Poorly conceived rules, restrictions and regulations may penalize the sensible majority without reducing deaths and injuries.

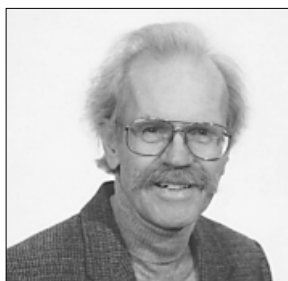
Good laws are driven by objectivity, hard facts and realism — not emotion or political expediency. Questionable, unenforceable legislation will not effectively address safety concerns.



## Stewart Moore Endowment for Traffic Safety in Lifestyle Advertising

In 1990, concerned about television commercials that featured unsafe driving, Stewart Moore started to write to automobile manufacturers, government, police, and Emile Therien.

For several years, Mr. Moore corresponded regularly with the Canada Safety Council on this issue and became a member. His annual contributions supported a concerted effort to influence lifestyle advertising to prevent car crashes.



Following his death in 1997, his wife set up The Stewart Moore Endowment for Traffic Safety in Lifestyle Advertising.

Now Mr. Moore's book of fiction short stories, *The Slow Tide of Nightfall*, focusing on father-son relationships, has been published. This book is available from CSC for \$10.65, including GST and shipping.

Proceeds from the sale of this book will be contributed to the Stewart Moore Endowment Fund. Δ

## SAFETY CANADA

*Safety Canada* is the member newsletter of the Canada Safety Council. It is also published on CSC's Web site. Articles may be reprinted with credit, except those copyrighted to other organizations. Please send a copy to the editor.

ISSN: 0048-8968

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*Hot Cars, from page 3...*

According to Dr. Oded Bar-Or, a pediatrician and director of the Children's Exercise and Nutrition Centre at McMaster University, extreme heat affects infants and small children more quickly and dramatically than adults. Because of their size, their core temperature can increase three to five times faster than that of an adult. Heat-stroke, or hyperthermia, occurs when the body's core temperature reaches 40.5 C (105° F).

Dr. Bar-Or's unprecedented study was funded by General Motors of Canada. It found that within 20 minutes the air temperature in a previously air-conditioned small car exposed to the sun on a 35 C day (95° F) exceeded 50 C (122° F). Within 40 minutes the temperature soared to 65.5 C (150° F). Even on sunny, cooler days, with temperatures in the low 20s C (70s F), the interior of a vehicle can become hot enough to be lethal.

Leaving a window slightly open, or "cracked," did little to prevent the temperature from rising to a level that is dangerous for children, vulnerable adults and pets.

Many parents and caregivers are simply not aware of the risk. The Canada Safety Council says never to leave children unattended in vehicles, and always to keep cars locked while in garages or driveways to prevent children from playing in them.

Data compiled by General Motors show at least 120 children in the US have died in hot, parked cars since 1996. In 1999 alone that number was 36. Most were under three years of age. No Canadian data are available. However, the Hamilton incident and others reported across this country clearly indicate this is a problem. In May, GM announced it is pioneering a sensor that sounds an alarm if it detects motion as subtle as the breathing of an infant when the temperature is dangerously high in a parked vehicle.

It is never safe to leave a child alone in a vehicle, even for a few minutes. Vehicles are simply not a place for children to play or to be left unattended. Δ

# Intersection

## Safety and the Motorcycle Rider

The image of the typical motorcyclist is changing. No longer do young, thrill-seeking riders predominate. No longer are motorcycles looked upon as cheap transportation. Today, more and more middle-aged riders are taking to the road. Many of them ride powerful, expensive machines. There's even a name for the new wave of motorcyclists — "rubies" (rich urban bikers).

The average age of riders in the Canada Safety Council's motorcycle training program is now late 30s, about 10 years older than a decade ago. In that time, age of the average US motorcycle buyer rose from 25 to 39 over the past 10 years. The typical California motorcycle buyer is a 42-year-old male white collar worker with an income of US\$67,000.

### Most riders are trained

Seventy per cent of all newly licensed motorcyclists in Canada (in Ontario, 85 per cent) take the Canada Safety Council's *Gearing Up* course. Enrollment is increasing as motorcycles regain their popularity. Twenty thousand riders took the course in 2000, including beginners and experienced riders. The program has achieved world-wide recognition for its excellence in content and delivery. Motorcycle enthusiasts become safer riders, and thoroughly enjoy the program.

Teaching someone how to ride a motorcycle is very different from training a new driver. Most new drivers need to learn how to operate a vehicle, obey the rules of the road and relate to traffic. On the other hand, most beginning motorcycle riders already know how to drive and have experience in the road environment. The bike is a second vehicle, often bought for recreation, and they want to be able to handle it safely.

**Gearing Up: For information and course locations visit the program Web site ([www.ridertraining.org](http://www.ridertraining.org)).**

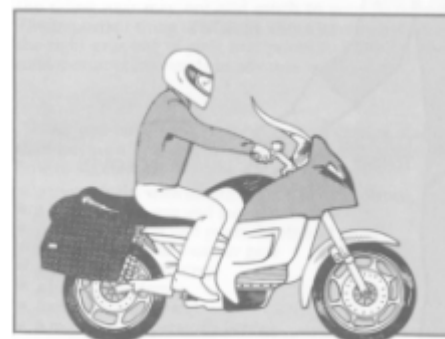
### Hot Car Warning

A Hamilton, Ontario area doctor who left his six month old daughter alone in the back seat of his vehicle in early May has been charged with abandoning the child. If convicted he could face a maximum penalty of two years in jail.

Leaving a child alone in the car can be extremely dangerous. On days that seem almost mild as well as the summer days of searing heat, the passenger compartment can turn into an oven, with potentially deadly consequences.

In the confined space of a car, temperatures can climb so rapidly that they overwhelm a child's ability to regulate his or her internal temperature. In a closed environment, the body, especially a small body, can go into shock quickly, and circulation to vital organs can fail.

*Continued on page 2...*



### Rider Training — Voluntary or Mandatory?

Ontario and Quebec share similar motorcycle riding environments. Both provinces have a comparable climate, riding season and number of motorcycles. Ontario has a population of 11.5 million, and 106,419 motorcycles registered for use on its roads. Quebec, with a population of 7.5 million, has 97,327 motorcycles.

However, the two jurisdictions have taken very different approaches to motorcycle rider licensing and training since the mid 1980s. From 1985 to 1997, motorcycle rider training was mandatory in Quebec, while Ontario had voluntary rider licensing incentives.

### Voluntary Incentive Systems

Ontario encourages new riders to take training by offering licensing incentives and insurance discounts to rider training graduates. Training is viewed as a means to learn how to operate a motorcycle in a safe and skilled manner. The number of new riders licensed and the enrollment in rider training programs has continued to rise over the past five years, even though motorcycle registration has remained relatively constant.

Ontario's voluntary system has some advantages over Quebec's mandatory system.

- Monitoring of school quality is less cumbersome.
- The cost for a person to take the program is 20 to 40 per cent lower.
- Fewer riders try to buy graduation certificates, since the certificate is not required to obtain a motorcycle license.

However, voluntary incentive systems for rider training also have drawbacks:

*Continued on page 4...*

...*Motorcycle Training, from page 3.*

The decline in motorcycle fatalities has outpaced a general downward trend as few people in general are being killed in motor vehicle crashes. Between 1983 and 1999, the total number of all traffic fatalities dropped 30 per cent. During that period, motorcycle registration dropped 33 per cent, so a reduction would be expected due to less exposure. However, fatalities dropped by a very impressive 65 per cent.

Many fatal motorcycle crashes have a common profile: single vehicle, on a weekend, in the summer, at night, in a rural location and on a road with a posted speed limit of 90 km/h and over. These crashes are typically the fault of the motorcyclist. Alcohol is involved in about one-third, well over half of which have excessively high BACs (over 0.15). Young riders account for only one in 10 motorcycle fatalities.

For any who dispute the value of training, recent experience is revealing. From 1985 to 1997, motorcycle rider training was mandatory in Quebec. In 1998—immediately following the removal of mandatory rider training in 1997—motorcycle fatalities shot up by 46 per cent. Quebec reintroduced mandatory rider training effective July 1, 2000.

Mandatory rider training offers benefits, but also has some drawbacks. Ontario, for example, has taken the route of voluntary training with incentives, which has proven more effective in the long run.

The bottom line is that there is no substitute for a safety conscious, sober, trained motorcycle rider.  $\Delta$

...*Mandatory or Voluntary? from page 3.*

- A longer time frame is required for program growth.
- It is difficult to serve remote areas with low rider population.
- Capital investment may be harder to find with no captive market.
- Some riders will always choose not to take training — although in Ontario 85 per cent of new riders take the CSC course.

Legislative incentives, such as recognized licensing testing at rider training sites in Ontario, have increased rider training enrolment. Novice riders also perceive the insurance discount as reducing the net cost of their training.

Convenience and cost, together with a reputable rider training program, are two major incentives to take training. The high rate of training is a factor in the consistently low rate of rider fatalities in the province.

### Mandatory Systems

Quebec implemented mandatory training in 1985, moved to non-mandatory training without incentives in 1997 and then re-introduced mandatory training in 2000.

Quebec's mandatory rider training model offers significant benefits:

- First and foremost, it saves lives, as shown by the 46 per cent increase in fatalities when enrolment fell after Quebec withdrew its mandatory program in 1997.
- Mandatory programs are quicker to implement and expand.
- They reach remote areas more easily.

- Private capital needed to purchase motorcycles and equipment is easier to find because there is a captive audience.

The Quebec system also demonstrates the drawbacks inherent in government-mandated training:

- A higher training cost for riders, due to the involvement of "for profit" driving school businesses.
- More reported cases of fraud, such as selling graduation certificates.
- The delinquency rate (riders without licenses) is estimated at 15 per cent.
- Because training is mandatory, new riders view it simply as the means to get a motorcycle license, as shown by the drop when the requirement was removed.

Quebec's government-run auto insurer, la Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec, cannot offer insurance discounts, since all novice riders must complete rider training.

### Voluntary Model Works Better

Ontario's voluntary rider training system has realized better results than Quebec's mandatory system. It has required less government intervention, is less costly, provides a better outlook with respect to motorcycle safety and has led to a lower rider fatality rate.

Based on the experiences in these two Canadian jurisdictions, it appears that Ontario offers a better model for future rider training enrolment and rider safety.

Experience across the border confirms this Canadian comparison. Many US states mandate safety courses for younger riders, but middle-aged riders are not required to take training. Over the past five years, fatalities among riders 35 and over have risen by nearly 60 per cent in that country, while there has been a 22 per cent drop among younger riders.  $\Delta$

*This article was based on a presentation by Raynald Marchand of the Canada Safety Council at the 2001 International Motorcycle Safety Conference March 1 to 4, 2001, Orlando, Florida, USA*

## Defensive Driving CD-ROM for New Drivers

In partnership with Shell Canada, the Canada Safety Council has just released an interactive CD-ROM for Windows.

Through graphic displays, animation, and interactive routines and tests, *RoadSmart* helps new drivers learn safe and smart driving practices. Real time images of safe driving in various driving environments enable the user to visualize and interact with various driving conditions, including snow, heavy rain, bright sunshine, multi-lane highways, city driving and other situations. It also shows the differences in traffic regulations among the provinces.

This program is a great way to refresh your knowledge or prepare for a learner's permit.

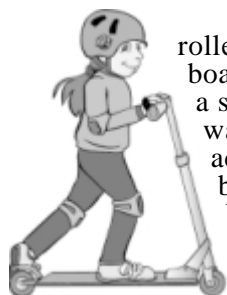


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# Public Platform

## Wheels in a Child's Life

With the warmer weather, children on bicycles, scooters, skateboards and in-line skates are everywhere.



Cycling, rollerblading, skateboarding and riding a scooter are great ways for kids to keep active. They need to be safety conscious, but they should get out there and have fun.

The shocking truth is that when it comes to kids being injured on wheeled devices, most mishaps are the fault of the child. That puts a big responsibility on parents to instill safety from a young age. They must supervise children to help them gain skill and learn the rules of the road.

Most cycling mishaps are falls, hitting a stationary object, and running into a bike or pedestrian. However, about 90 per cent of the fatalities involve motor vehicles.

When children follow each other on their bikes, the first child may run a stop sign and get through and the next one is hit. Children must always assess the traffic situation for themselves.

Almost two-thirds of in-line skating injuries happen on roads and sidewalks. Relatively few occur in those areas best suited for recreational in-line skating, such as playgrounds and rinks.

The recent scooter fad has been accompanied by a surge in related injuries, mostly to children under 15 years of age. Protective equipment, including wearing a helmet, could have prevented many of the injuries. Another problem is that some children try spins, jumps and twirls. Scooters were not built for daredevil stunts. They're designed to be ridden on smooth, flat surfaces.

What's the single most important precaution for children on wheels? The

**The single most important precaution is to wear a bicycle helmet.**

Canada Safety Council insists on the value of wearing a bicycle helmet for all these activities.

In a spill, the forehead usually hits the ground first, and head injuries cause most fatalities and serious injuries. Three out of four cyclist fatalities involves a head injury, and 85 per cent of



serious head injuries can be prevented by wearing a helmet.

Buy and use only helmets which bear the CSA mark. Those helmets meet the requirements of Canada's national standard for bicycle helmets. CSA International now has a bicycle helmet standard for children under five, the first in North America. Parents should look for helmets with a permanent yellow label informing purchasers that the helmet is specially designed for cyclists and cycle passengers under the age of five.

In May and June, schools across Canada participated in Elmer the Safety Elephant's *Wheels in my Life* poster contest, sponsored by the Canada Safety Council and the Liberty Mutual Insurance Group. Children created a poster with a message on how they prevent mishaps from happening while they are riding their bicycle, scooter, skateboard or roller blades. The winning entries are posted on CSC's Web site.  $\Delta$

See *Safety on Wheels*, page 6.

## In-line Skaters Not Wearing Protective Gear

Few in-line skaters wear protective gear even though the equipment is relatively inexpensive and can reduce the number and severity of injuries. A study by the Traffic Injury Research Foundation and the University of North Carolina's Highway Safety Research Center found almost two-thirds of in-line skaters used no protective equipment when skating.

During July and August of 1999, 877 in-line skaters were observed in 15 British Columbia municipalities. The overwhelming majority wore no protective equipment whatsoever. Only 25 per cent wore wrist guards, 13 per cent wore helmets, 14 per cent wore elbow pads and 10 per cent wore knee pads. Overall, 36 per cent of skaters wore at least one piece of protective gear, while less than three per cent wore all four types.

The use of protective equipment varied according to skater location. Protective equipment was most frequently used by skaters on recreational pathways (42 per cent wore at least one piece of equipment). Skaters observed

Continued on page 6...

### Kwiz Korner

**True or false?** Do you know how to prevent dog bites?

1. If you are approached by a stray dog, just stand still. **T/F**
2. It is safe to pet a sleeping dog. **T/F**
3. Neutering or spaying will make a dog less aggressive. **T/F**
4. Puppies should be allowed play biting, as it is harmless. **T/F**
5. Youths aged 12 to 19 have the highest rate of serious dog bites. **T/F**

Answers on page 6.

## Risk Management for School Activities

In response to the *Safety Canada* article on school field trips (April issue), the Ontario School Boards' Insurance wrote to say that it concurs with CSC's position on the need to establish a formal risk assessment process for all school activities and to share OSBIE's position statement passed in December 2000.

OSBIE is a school board owned, non-profit insurance program representing 89 per cent of the school boards in Ontario. Its primary goals are to insure member school boards against losses and promote safe school practices.

### OSBIE Position Statement – Extra-Curricular Activities

Risk Management is a systematic approach to preventing or reducing exposure to losses. School boards, administrators, employees and volunteers are all responsible for risk management. School boards should consider steps, such as the following, as effective ways to prevent student injuries:

- (a) Identify hazardous situations and/or activities which may not be appropriate as a school activity.
- (b) Identify various risk management strategies to eliminate or reduce the known hazards. For example:

*Avoid the Risk.* If the activity has a high risk of injury and cannot be made safe by removing known

hazards or by modifying it, then the activity should be avoided.

*Reduce the Risk.* Remove the known hazards for the activity:

- Ensure staff, volunteer supervisors and coaches have the proper training and qualifications to perform their duties;
- Adhere to any applicable standards or codes (examples are given);
- Ensure the activity is organized and operated in compliance with regulations set out by any athletic association or governing body related to that sport or activity;
- Require groups or individuals who wish to organize and operate extra-curricular activities privately to carry their own insurance and to provide evidence of valid insurance coverage; and
- Require signed Informed Consent forms for all participants.

(c) Select and implement the most appropriate techniques that fit with the situation. Often there are different combinations that will address the various hazards identified.

(d) Monitor the results of the risk management plan that has been chosen. Examples of documents to be retained for this purpose:

- Documentation of coaching certificates;
- Completed checklists used with the Physical Education Safety Guidelines;
- Signed Informed Consent forms; and
- Certificates of Insurance from outside organizations using school premises. Δ

*In-line skaters, from page 5.*

in neighborhoods were least likely to wear protective equipment (26 per cent wore any equipment).

In 1998, data from the Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program showed that the most frequent injuries were to the forearm (24 per cent) and wrist (20 per cent). Head injuries accounted for 5.6 per cent of the total.

This study underscores the need to find ways to increase the use of protective gear by in-line skaters. Δ

To obtain "Use of Protective Equipment by In-Line Skaters: An Observational Study" contact the Traffic Injury Research Foundation. Tel.: (613) 238-5235. Fax: (613) 238-5292.

## Safety on Wheels

### Bicycles

#### 1. Make sure your bicycle is safe.

- Does it work properly? Check tires, brakes, etc .
- Does it fit properly? You should be able to straddle the bike with both feet on the ground; a bike that is too big or too small is a safety hazard.
- Does it have a bell, a light and reflectors?

#### 2. Obey all signs, signals and rules of the road.

- Know the signals for riding on the road (stop, turn right, turn left) and know how to shoulder check before turning.
- Child cyclists must obey the same rules of the road as adult drivers: ride on the right side of the road, stop for stop signs and red lights, signal turns, and yield to traffic that has the right-of-way.

#### 3. Always wear a helmet that fits properly.

- The helmet should protect the forehead without slipping forwards or backwards; it should not move unless the scalp moves.

### In-line Skates, Skateboards and Scooters

#### 1. Protect yourself from injury.

- Wear protective gear: a bicycle helmet, wrist guards, gloves, knee and elbow pads and protective clothing (long sleeves and pants).

#### 2. Skate and ride where it's safe.

- Use roller rinks, parks and playgrounds. Stay away from roads and traffic.
- Skate or ride on dry surfaces and under good weather conditions.
- Skate or ride on the right side of paths and trails.

#### 3. Watch out for what's around you.

- Stay away from water, oil or debris or uneven or broken pavement.
- Always yield to pedestrians.
- Be careful near stairs and steps.

### Answers to Kwiz Korner

**1. True.** Stand still and let the dog sniff you. Do not stare at the dog or turn your back and run. If the dog is barking or growling, slowly walk away, backwards or sideways, keeping the dog in view.

**2. False.** "Let sleeping dogs lie." Even a friendly dog that is unexpectedly disturbed may feel threatened and bite, perhaps by mistake.

**3. True.** Sterilizing a dog reduces its aggressive tendencies significantly. In a US survey of over 200 fatal dog attacks, all but two cases involved unneutered or unspayed dogs.

**4. False.** Discourage all biting, even play biting. It could lead to problems later.

**5. False.** Children under nine are the most common victims because they lack judgement or don't recognize the dog's warning signs, and are more likely to act in a way the dog considers threatening.

# On the Job

## Active Living at Work

The Canada Safety Council works with Health Canada through the Canadian Council for Health and Active Living at Work (CCHALW) to bring active living programs into the workplace. CSC serves as secretariat for CCHALW.

A 1998 survey by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute (CFLRI) found that 63 per cent of adults aged 18 and older are not active enough to achieve optimal health benefits.

That's not because they don't understand the importance of keeping fit. CFLRI reports that 85 per cent of Canadians value physical activity, 72 per cent hold positive beliefs about the outcome of physical activity, and most would like to become more physically active.

The biggest problem is finding time. Work, family responsibilities and other priorities interfere with the time a person might spend on physical activities.

Fifteen million Canadians spend one-half of their waking hours at work. Many sit at a desk or machine for most of the day, and many drive a vehicle on the job or to commute.

Research shows that Canadians who are sedentary at work are also sedentary in their leisure time. It is vital, therefore, to find ways of increasing physical activity at and around work.



### Benefits of Workplace Programs

There are strong reasons for integrating active living with work:

- Companies who have introduced active living policies say they make good business sense.
- Employers need to embrace due diligence in today's high-paced work world.
- Access to physical activity in the workplace and cafeterias with healthy foods are working conditions that help attract the best and the brightest workforce.

Research suggests a link between active living/fitness and individual employee well-being. Healthier employees result in:

- lower health-care costs;
- lower turnover rates;
- reduced absenteeism;
- fewer medical claims;
- higher productivity; and
- improved employee morale.



On the other hand, organizations that have physically inactive employees may have higher costs. Fatigue, inattention, accidents and low productivity are more common among inactive employees. Fit employees miss fewer days of work, have fewer accidents, are less prone to the harmful effects of stress, and have higher job satisfaction than non-fit ones.

Stress is playing an increasingly important role in workplace illness and sick days. One of the ways organizations can help employees manage stress is to help them to be physically active in and around the workplace.

It's no secret that Canada's work force is aging — and doctors say that the best anti-aging "pill" is regular physical activity.

### Employers Who Promote Fitness

A 1992 National Workplace Survey of 3,500 companies revealed that many employers encourage their workers to be active.

Of companies with more than 100 employees, 39 per cent of had some form of fitness program and 73 per cent offered sport and recreation opportunities. Among small companies (less than 50 employees), 13 per cent had fitness programs and 42 per cent offered sport and recreation opportunities.

In 1998, Health Canada surveyed 120 workplaces that encourage and support fitness or active living programs and policies in the workplace. The survey showed that more and more employers are realizing the importance of having a fitness and active living program. Only 16 per cent had a program prior to 1980; 45 per cent implemented between 1981-90, and 38.7 per cent between 1991-98.

More than 70 per cent offered a class in at least one of the following areas: low-impact aerobics, strength and conditioning, and/or step aerobics. Over half offered stretch and strengthen, walking, and yoga classes.

Group recreation programs such as baseball, softball and slow pitch were the most popular programs in most organizations. Other group programs included hockey, racquetball and walking clubs. Group events included golf tournaments, summer active events, family fun days and corporate walk days.

Seventy-two per cent had fitness facilities available to their employees; 35 per cent offered a subsidy to employees using an external facility; while 20 per cent of organizations offered employees subsidies for both internal and external facilities.

Most of these fitness-conscious organizations reported that active living programs are integrated with other health management programs such as education on nutrition and weight management, back/spinal health, stress management, health-risk screening and disease management.

### New Resource

*The Business Case for Active Living at Work*, developed by CCHALW with funding from Health Canada, was launched on the Internet in April. Information on the site [www.activelivingatwork.com](http://www.activelivingatwork.com) identifies the benefits of being active in the workplace, summarizes the research, gives information about



what works and how to get started, and provides a template for practitioners to develop a business case for active living in their own organizations. △

...Cell phones, from page 1.

crash. In comparison, 11.4 per cent were distracted by adjusting a radio, cassette or CD, and almost 30 per cent were distracted by an outside person, object or event.

Our society has to a great extent condoned multitasking while driving. Most vehicles have cup holders. Many also have complex radios and sound systems. Omnipresent drive-throughs encourage drivers to pick up food and beverages. Drivers eat, discipline their kids, use cell phones and even shave or apply make-up on the road.

According to a recent study commissioned by TheSteelAlliance and the Canada Safety Council, fully 75 per cent of those surveyed admitted to performing personal or work-related tasks while driving.

A new Canada Safety Council program will help drivers understand their capabilities and limitations behind the wheel, and suggest ways to ensure safety is always the focus. The program, to be launched this summer, will feature a video and other supporting material for driver training and education, as well as public service announcements. The project has been underway for several months and is being guided by a broad cross-section of national and regional safety organizations, with funding from the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association.

## Electronic Etiquette Enforcement

Without doubt, wireless phones can be annoying. That is why Industry Canada recently announced it will consider legalizing cell phone silencers or jammers. These devices block signals within a certain radius by preventing phones from contacting cellular radio towers.

Currently it is illegal to interfere with or obstruct radio communication. Jammers may be used only when public safety is at risk, and even then, only with special permission: for example, where terrorists could use a cell phone to detonate explosives.

A recent survey found that nearly 70 per cent of respondents supported the use of jammers in places of worship, libraries and movie theatres. But when it comes to establishments like shopping malls, night clubs and restaurants, about the same number oppose them.

In noisy malls or bars, a discreetly used phone does not disturb other patrons. On the other hand, in a church, library or theatre, people are expected to respect the need for quiet. Beeping phones and needless talking are poor etiquette.

Cinemas have mostly solved the problem with ads telling people to turn off their phones. Some restaurants have signs asking diners to refrain from cell phone conversations. A standard sign requesting

patrons to turn off their wireless devices might be a good idea. However, rudeness is not the fault of the phone.

In addition to the fact that jamming may block out emergency calls, the other safety issue is that the legalization of silencing devices will lead to increased availability. Most churches, libraries and theatres are unlikely to dedicate money to buy the technology. Malls and night clubs will see no need. So, where would silencers be used? Criminals sometimes cut the hardwiring to a home in a robbery. Will silencers be used to cut off wireless communication when committing crimes?

Limiting the use of certain technologies to security and military applications is an accepted convention. In the case of silencers, the public interest is best served by maintaining the status quo. Δ

### References:

Is Using a Car Phone Like Driving Drunk? D. A. Redelmeier and R. J. Tibshirani, *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1997.

Le risque d'accidents de la route en relation avec l'utilisation d'un téléphone mobile, Dr Claire Laberge-Nadeau, *Directrice du Laboratoire sur la sécurité des transports, Université de Montréal, Février 2001.*

The Role of Driver Distraction in Traffic Crashes, *University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, Chapel Hill, NC, prepared for theAAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, Washington, DC, May 2001. <http://www.aaafoundation.org>*

## Did you know?

A survey of 4,894 Ontario students in grades 7 to 13 shows an alarming rise in the use of alcohol. The Institute for Social Research at York University found that in 1999, 67.5 per cent of all students reported drinking during the previous 12 months, up from the 1997 level of 59.6 per cent. In 1999, 19.7% of drinkers drank weekly, up from 14.4 per cent in 1993. More drinkers in 1999 reported heavy drinking episodes: since 1993, the consumption of five or more drinks on a single occasion increased from 30.5 per cent to 42.4 per cent. *Ontario Student Drug Use Survey, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health*

Injuries led to 195,116 acute care hospital admissions in Canada in 1998-1999, down 12 per cent from 1994-1995. Three per cent of these (5,941) died while in hospital. Falls accounted for 54 per cent of all injury admissions and were the leading cause of in-hospital deaths due to injury (74 per

cent). Traffic injuries were second, at 15 per cent. Of the injuries due to motor vehicle collisions, the 15 to 34 year old age group represented 42 per cent. For Canadians aged 1 to 44 years, deaths due to trauma are the leading cause of potential years of life lost.

*National Trauma Registry Hospital Injury Admissions Report 1998/99, Canadian Institute for Health Information*

More than half the reported victims of deceptive or fraudulent telemarketing are over age 60, and more than two-thirds are women. People over 60 account for three-quarters of those defrauded of more than \$5,000 and the vast majority are victimized more than once. Altogether this type of scam bilks Canadians of an estimated \$40 million annually.

*Expression, Bulletin of the National Advisory Council on Aging, Vol. 14, No. 2, Spring 2001*

Ballistic tests at the RCMP Forensic Laboratory in Regina, SK, have determined that the minimum velocity of 246 ft/sec

from a BB gun pellet can cause "serious bodily injury" to the human eye. BB guns can produce velocities of over 600 ft/sec, which can kill an adult or child. Under the *Firearms Act*, a firearm is defined as "any barrelled weapon from which any shot, bullet or other projectile can be discharged and that is capable of causing serious bodily injury or death to a person." *Gazette, A Royal Canadian Mounted Police Publication, Vol. 63, No. 2, 2001*

Manitoba statistics for 1990 to 2000 showed that occupational diseases, where the exposure to harmful substances occurred 20 to 30 years earlier, accounted for 28 per cent of accepted fatalities. Transportation-related accidents (motor vehicles, trains and aircraft) were second, with 24 per cent of job-related deaths. The highest number of fatalities were in construction (26 per cent).

*Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba Five Year Plan 2001-2005*