



# SAFETY CANADA

The member newsletter of the Canada Safety Council

## Drivers on Pot — Issues and Options

The UK government is reclassifying cannabis. While the drug remains illegal, it is now classed with amphetamines and barbiturates, rather than heroin. The advisory council which recommended the change stressed that cannabis is unquestionably harmful and was anxious that the public be informed of the dangers associated with its use. A public education campaign is being implemented as part of that country's drug strategy.

Canada's federal government is moving in a somewhat similar direction. In response to recommendations from a Senate special committee on illegal drugs, it wants to decriminalize possession of small amounts of cannabis. Although the substance would still be illegal, this proposal has raised concerns about increased use, which may lead to more drivers impaired by marijuana.

Under the *Criminal Code of Canada*, drivers can be charged if impaired by alcohol or drugs. However, there is no *per se* offence for substances other than alcohol. Criminal charges can be laid if a driver's blood alcohol concentration (BAC) is 0.08 or higher. Above that level, the likelihood of a crash is known to increase substantially. Most Canadian jurisdictions impose administrative licence suspensions at BACs of 0.05 or lower.

Roadside breathalysers provide an easy, effective and convenient way for police to detect and measure the presence of alcohol. However, at present there is no reliable and non-intrusive rapid roadside method to test for pot. Even if a "potalyser" were available, a defensible *per se* limit must be set, at which a pot-using driver is criminally impaired.

In Canada, some police services have officers trained specifically as drug recognition experts, who can determine if a driver is impaired by drugs. The Senate special committee felt this visual recognition method has yielded satisfactory results.

### Who's using pot?

The Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF) found that 1.5 per cent of drivers surveyed in its 2002 Road Safety Monitor had used marijuana within two hours of taking the wheel during the last year. The survey found that young men are most likely to drive after using marijuana or other illegal drugs. One-third of those

who drove after using marijuana also drove after drinking.

An Ontario study released in March 2003 showed 15 per cent of students in grades 10 to 13 who had a driver's licence reported driving within an hour after consuming two or more drinks during the last year. Even more, 20 per cent, reported driving within an hour after using cannabis.

The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse says cannabis use by Canadian teens is among the highest in the world. In Canada (as well as Australia, France, Ireland, UK and the US) more than 25 per cent of all high school students report past-year use.

In its September 2002 report, the Senate special committee concluded that between five and 12 per cent of drivers may drive under the influence of cannabis; this percentage increases to over 20 per cent for young men under 25 years of age.

### How does pot affect drivers?

The psychoactive chemical in marijuana is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). THC has a very different effect from alcohol. Pot users are acutely aware of their impairment — that is, they feel "high" — and some compensate by trying to drive more cautiously.

THC diminishes psychomotor skills and attention span. It reduces the ability to perform tracking tasks; at

*To page 4...*



### INSIDE

School Trips .....	2
Inquest Recommendations ...	2
Intersection	
LCVs .....	3
Candid Cameras .....	3
Police Award .....	3
Public Platform	
Ski/Snowboard Helmets .....	5
Shuttle Disaster .....	5
Pellet Guns .....	6
Soccer / Arenas .....	8
On the Job	
Work-Life Balance .....	7
DDC Online .....	7

## See and Be Seen

### *Tips for parents on how to keep kids safe on the street*

Hopping on the bus, walking home with friends, or even riding a bike to school for the first time — there are so many milestones that children experience throughout their first few years of school, and many of these experiences involve learning how to use neighbourhood streets.

This fall in conjunction with National School Safety Week (October 17 to 23), Alliance Tire Professionals and the Canada Safety Council are encouraging kids to "see and be seen". K.O.P. — Kids On Patrol — promotes the importance of road safety to young children through resources provided to schools across the country.

In October, increased hours of darkness combine with the excitement around Halloween to make pedestrian safety a major issue for kids at this time of year.

*To page 6...*

ERRATUM July 2003 cover story

**CAUTION: Animals Crossing**

Alberta does not report the most wildlife collisions in December and January. According to the APRCWA Bulletin (Fall 2002) published by the Government of Alberta, most vehicle-wildlife collisions in that province occur in November, at the peak of the deer-mating season.

### Fall 2003 Campaigns

National School Safety Week  
(October 17 to 23) — See and Be Seen

National Community Safety  
and Crime Prevention  
Campaign (November) —  
Bystanders

National Seniors' Safety Week  
(November 6 to 12) —  
Medications and Driving

National Home Fire Safety  
Week (November 24 to 30) —  
Smoke Alarms

National Safe Driving Week  
(December 1 to 7) — Driver  
Distractions

*Shuttle, from page 5.*

accepted more and more risk. The disaster resulted from a problem that was well known to NASA engineers.

The report's findings should give us all pause. Cutbacks may be inevitable. Governments must control costs. The private sector must stay competitive. However, it is false economy to cut back on safety. Time and time again, costly, preventable catastrophes happen because potential risks in the system are accepted as normal. Time and time again, improvements to safety-related infrastructure are marginalized and considered "frills."

Complacency must never be allowed to take hold when it comes to safety. Risk management, a systematic approach to prevent or reduce exposure to losses, must always be a key priority. □

## President's Perspective

As the new school year begins, parents should take note of recently released reports that examine what went wrong on two school trips that ended in tragedy.

In June 2002, a five-year-old Winnipeg boy drowned in a swimming pool on a school trip. The coroner's 70 page report made 47 recommendations. They covered the number of lifeguards at crowded pools, higher standards for lifeguard training, safety audits for public pools, new procedures for school trips and a safety awareness campaign. However, the boy's father pointed out that if policies already in place had been followed his son would still be alive.

In February 2003, seven Alberta teens on a school ski trip were killed in an avalanche. A 58-page report prepared by an independent expert on adventure education said both the school and the parents contributed to the deaths and stressed that responsibility for safety goes two ways. While the report did not assign blame, it suggested that the school failed in assessing, managing and communicating risk levels. It also criticized the complacent attitude of parents, some of whom signed consent forms without knowing where their children were going or what they would be doing.

How can you make sure your child will be safe on a school trip? First and foremost, make sure a risk management policy is in place — and that the school adheres to it. Find out the details of the outing. If you have reservations, don't give permission for your child to go. Before your child goes, reinforce behaviour expectations.

Responsibility for safety is a two-way street. Schools and parents must work together to make sure school trips never end in tragedy.



## Inquest Recommends School Trip Precautions

In his report, the Manitoba judge who examined the death of a five-year-old kindergarten student on a school swimming trip made 47 recommendations, including the following which address contingency planning:

12. That detailed pre-event planning and contingency planning be required in writing by the school division for all school outings and presented to the assistant superintendent or the principal for approval.
13. That such plans include but not be limited to:
  - a) the designation of an in-charge teacher;
  - b) a requirement for a planning visit to the venue and a discussion with appropriate venue personnel;
  - c) a requirement for a written agreement with the venue as to mutual expectations and commitments regarding inter alia, supervision;
  - d) a requirement that immediately prior to departure a list of those students actually attending the outing be prepared by the teacher of each class and left at the school, with another copy provided to the in-charge teacher for the outing;
  - e) particularly for outings involving students in Grades K to 6, that consideration be given to utilization of a "buddy system" where each child is assigned a buddy and on a specified signal is to find their buddy and stay with them until a head count is done. Through such a system checks can readily be done on entering and leaving a facility for example and at other appropriate points;
  - f) a particular vehicle being identified to all adults in attendance as being available for use in case of a medical emergency;
  - g) a plan for parent notification in the event of an emergency being in place (e.g. the school secretary to do notifications based on the pre-departure attendance lists);
  - h) a follow-up person being designated and prepared for any serious incident that might occur — for such tasks as dealing with investigators, identifying witnesses, preserving the scene of any accident until investigators arrive, etc.;
  - i) if a serious incident does occur, a requirement for written reports to be prepared by all teachers in attendance at the outing and given to designated school and school board personnel;
  - j) other potential provisions such as procedures for dealing with injuries as outlined in the "Safety Guidelines for Physical Activities in Manitoba Schools." □

## SAFETY CANADA

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# Intersection

## The Safety of Long Combination Vehicles

Long Combination Vehicles (LCVs) are truck tractors with two or three trailers. Either the number of trailers or the combined length of the configuration exceeds normal limits. Within Canada, they operate by special permit in Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and to a limited extent in British Columbia and the Northwest Territories.

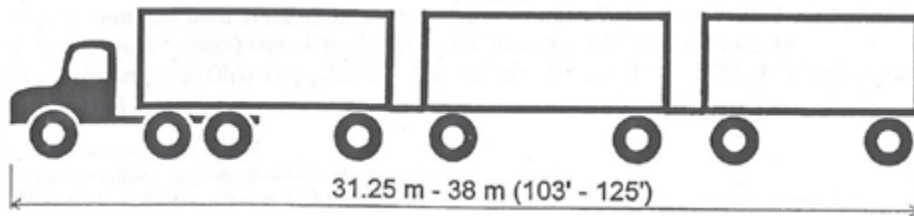
LCV permits specify the conditions under which the vehicles are allowed to operate, such as highways on which they can be driven, time of day, time of year, weather conditions and driver experience. There are also speed restrictions. In Alberta, for example, the speed of LCVs is limited to 100 km/h even where the general limit is 110 km/h. Driver qualifications are stringent.

While there are safety concerns about LCVs, their collision rate is relatively low. This may be because of the strict controls placed on them by the carriers and by the road authorities, and because the drivers must meet high standards of skill and experience.

A literature review commissioned by the Canada Safety Council found that overall there is little difference in crash rates between LCVs and other trucks when operated under similar conditions of weather, road and driver experience. However, LCVs reduce the kilometres travelled to move the same volume of freight. Factoring in exposure and freight demand, LCVs appear to have a safety record equivalent to standard trucks. □

Reference: *Literature Review of the Safety of Long Combination Vehicles and their Operation in Canada*, prepared for the Canada Safety Council by Ray Barton and L.P. Tardif, June, 2003.

Below: Triple Trailer Unit



## Survey Confirms Canadians Want Photo Enforcement

The Canada Safety Council commissioned a Decima teleVox survey of 2,000 Canadians to find out their attitudes towards traffic enforcement. The results of the September 2003 poll closely parallel a similar one done in January 2001.

About 35 per cent of Canadians feel there is not enough traditional traffic enforcement by police, including roadside checks, speed traps, and the general visibility of police. Over half (55 per cent) feel the level is about right. Counting “strongly support” and “somewhat support”, 84 per cent support photo radar in school zones, 78 per cent support the use of cameras to identify vehicles that go through intersections after the traffic light has turned red, and 66 per cent support photo radar on the highway. When asked if there should be warning signs to advise of the possible presence of photo enforcement 68 per cent said yes. □

DDC Online, from page 7.

### Green DDC Online Content

1. Principles and Foundations
2. Intersections
3. The Driver
4. Passing
5. Aggressive Driving
6. Green Driving Supplementary
7. More Defensive Driving Tips
8. Winter Driving

## 2003 Police Awards

The National Police Award for Traffic Safety was presented August 26, 2003 at the annual conference of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACCP) in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The award recognizes officers who go beyond the call of duty to keep road users safe. It is a joint initiative of CACCP, the Canada Safety Council and Transport Canada.

Topping the list of outstanding initiatives was a multidisciplinary education campaign. Brian Jonah, Transport Canada's Acting Director General of Road Safety and Motor Vehicle Regulations presented the award to Sergeant Rodney Brown, who received it on behalf of the North Western Ontario Highway Safety Education Committee from Thunder Bay, Ontario.

The winning campaign was conceived and developed by Staff Sergeant Bob Beatty of the Ontario Provincial Police – North West Regional Headquarters. Over a three-year period, the North Western Ontario Highway Safety Education Committee promoted proper driving habits on highways in the districts of Thunder Bay and Kenora Rainy River. Extensive education, training and enforcement targeted drivers of both personal and commercial motor vehicles.

The two Honourable Mention Awards both went to officers from the Montreal Police Department.

Sergeant Eric La Penna, Officer Simon Arsenault, and Officer Eric Soumphophakdy of the Montreal Police Department, Community Detachment 26, conducted an in-depth study of traffic incidents on Côte-des-Neiges and implemented solutions that addressed major traffic safety concerns. Significant improvements in seat belt compliance, speed reduction, parking infractions and pedestrian safety resulted from their work.

Officer Rénaud Tellier of the Montreal Police Department, Community Detachment 6, conducted a pilot project to improve pedestrian safety at crosswalks within the city. Modifying and improving crosswalk infrastructure and visibility considerably reduced vehicle speeds at crosswalks and also led to an increase in motorist respect for pedestrians.

The 2003 winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award for Road Safety was Senior Constable Kevin Armstrong of the Chatham Traffic Management Unit of the Ontario Provincial Police. Senior Constable Armstrong was recognised for his outstanding dedication to safety on Canadian roadways throughout his 19-year career with the OPP. □

*Pot, from page 1.*

high doses, users drive less accurately and show difficulty with steering. Alcohol additionally impairs cognitive function, including risk perception, decision-making and planning. It can also trigger aggressive driving behaviour such as speeding and following too closely.

For alcohol, levels of impairment have been correlated with specific concentrations in the blood. No such correlation is available for THC. Complicating the issue, THC can be detected in the body for up to four weeks, although its impairing effects do not last.

Studies indicate that the effect of cannabis use on driving is related to the dose. Some claim that a single glass of wine will impair driving more than smoking a joint. However, the potency of a joint can vary considerably. Driver use of cannabis is of particular concern when combined with alcohol. The combination increases a drinking driver's risk of being responsible for a crash.

Further research is needed in order to establish a THC level at which the substance criminally impairs driving ability, and how to assess drivers.

In January 2002, the European Commission initiated a three-year project with the acronym IMMORTAL (Impaired Motorists, Methods of Roadside Testing and Assessment for Licensing). The results of this study will provide a much-needed scientific base for legislation.

### Cannabis and Crashes

A significant number of drivers killed in road crashes have a combination of drugs and alcohol. ("Drugs" include cannabis and other illicit substances as well as prescription and over-the-counter medications.)

- A TIRF study of Ontario driver fatalities in the early 1980s determined that over half of all the deceased who tested positive for drugs had also been drinking.
- A similar 1990 study found alcohol in 57 per cent and cannabis in 11 per cent of driver fatalities. Of the cases that were positive for cannabis in the blood, 84 per cent also tested positive for alcohol and 70 per cent were males under age 25.
- In a British Columbia study of drivers killed in 1990 and 1991, 48 per cent tested positive for alcohol. Drugs were found in 20 per cent of all cases; cannabis alone accounted for 13 per cent. Over half of drivers

who tested positive for any drugs had also been drinking.

- A 2002 Quebec study showed drugs are implicated in a substantial number of fatal crashes. Cannabis was detected in 19.5 per cent of driver fatalities. Alcohol was found in 41 per cent of all drug-positive cases. In the roadside sample, drugs were found in 11.8 per cent of drivers, including 6.7 per cent who had cannabis. Alcohol was detected in 5.1 per cent. Alcohol and drugs were found together in 5.9 per cent of drug-positive cases.
- A UK Department for Transport study published in 2000 revealed that traces of illicit drugs were present in 18 per cent of road fatalities in that country, a six-fold increase from the mid-1980s. Cannabis was found in two-thirds of these cases.

### Legal Options

France has passed a law making it a crime to drive under the influence of drugs. The law foresees a two-year prison

sentence and a fine of 4,500 euros (over \$7,100 Cdn) for anyone driving or accompanying someone driving

"under the influence of plants or substances classified as narcotics." These measures are above and beyond those for drunk driving. Critics say it will be very hard to implement the new law. Police officers may have a hard time getting suspected drug users to a medical clinic or hospital for blood or urine tests.

This zero tolerance approach would not likely work in Canada. French law, unlike Canadian law, assumes the accused is guilty and is not as open to court challenges.

Other EU countries take varying approaches to drug-impaired driving. In Germany and Spain, detection of any trace of a drug gives rise to an administrative offence, but there must be proof of impaired driving skills for a criminal charge to be applied.

In January 2003, a judge in Pembroke, Ontario acquitted a man charged with driving while impaired by marijuana. The accused had a medical exemption allowing him to smoke marijuana as a treatment for his multiple sclerosis. The judge could not tell what caused the accused to swerve over the centre line when driving, and to slur his speech and lose his balance when police pulled him over. It could have been the pot, the illness or some other factor.

Conviction under the Criminal Code of Canada requires proof "beyond a reasonable doubt," so Canadian legislators must weigh their alternatives carefully. In the absence of definitive research on how cannabis use relates to road crashes, court challenges may hinder conviction in criminal cases. Until sufficient evidence is available, sanctions outside the Criminal Code should be seriously considered.

Administrative licence suspensions have proven to be an effective tool in the fight against impaired driving. Most provinces impose 12 to 24 hour suspensions under their traffic codes on drivers whose BAC is below the 0.08 criminal limit. These suspensions remove potentially dangerous drivers from the road. They provide a stern and effective warning without the punitive lifetime consequences of a criminal record and a costly criminal court case.

The Canada Safety Council urges provincial and territorial governments to consider imposing administrative

### Driver use of cannabis is of particular concern when combined with alcohol.

licence suspensions on drivers who have been using cannabis. Police with reason to believe a driver has been smoking pot

should be able to suspend that driver's licence under provincial highway traffic safety acts. If alcohol is also involved, appropriate action would be taken depending on the BAC.

The prevalence of cannabis use among drivers is cause for concern. Precautionary action is needed — but the research to date does not support zero tolerance with automatic criminal sanctions. □

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# Public Platform

## Helmets for Skiers and Boarders

Skiing has evolved into a faster sport than it was 10 years ago, and snowboarding has become very popular. As a result, more skiers and boarders protect themselves by wearing a helmet. During the mid to late 1990s, ski helmet sales increased 10-fold in six years. It is no longer as rare to see people wearing helmets on the slopes as it was even a couple of years ago.

Serious head injuries account for less than three per cent of total injuries among skiers and snowboarders, yet they are the leading cause of death, and the injuries can have lifelong consequences.

A study of skiers treated for head injuries at a Colorado trauma centre was published in the October 2002 issue of *The Journal of Trauma*. It found that collisions with trees were the most common cause of head injury and were responsible for the most severe injuries. Snowboarders were three times more likely to suffer a head injury than skiers.

### Helmets for Young and Old

An unhelmeted five-year-old girl was killed when she skied into a tree at Aspen, Colorado in the spring of 2001. One month later, a helmeted five-year-old boy had a similar crash in the same area survived with a dented helmet and a concussion.

The day after the second incident, the Aspen Highlands Skiing Company mandated that all children six and under at its ski school must wear helmets. In the 2002-2003 season the requirement was extended to age 12. In September 2002, the National Ski Areas Association launched its 'Lids On Kids' Web site to promote ski helmets and slope safety education ([www.lidsonkids.org](http://www.lidsonkids.org)).

**Many skiers consider them not only a safety device but also a fashion accessory.**

In Norway and Finnish Lapland, ski resorts provide helmets for children up to the age of seven. In Sweden, helmets are given to children up to the age of 11.

Over the past year or two, operators in Canada have begun to rent helmets, usually for around five or six



dollars a day, and some require children to wear helmets for classes. Most require people entering the half-pipe to wear a helmet. The Canadian Ski Patrol strongly supports the use of helmets by children and by all snow sliders participating in competitive events.

The recent surge in helmet use on Canadian ski hills is reflected in all age groups. Today's ski helmets are so light, comfortable and stylish that many skiers consider them not only a safety device but also a fashion accessory.

Parents must teach by example. If they want their children to wear a helmet and ski safely, they should do the same. It's also important for professional skiers and boarders to set a good role model by wearing helmets.

The older you get, the harder it is to recover from a concussion.

*Continued on page 6...*

*Lids on Kids logo used with permission.*

## Safety Goes First

When the space shuttle Columbia was destroyed in February 2003 seven astronauts died. The report on the disaster reveals it was the result of safety practices that had been flawed for 20 years. Even after the Challenger blew up in 1986, also killing seven astronauts, NASA made no improvements to its safety systems.

The Columbia Accident Investigation Board report was released in August 2003. It found that NASA mission managers accepted flaws in the system as normal. They did not recognize that these problems could lead to a catastrophe, and they discouraged dissenting voices.

The government and upper echelons of NASA exerted constant pressure to reduce or at least freeze operating costs for the shuttle. Safety and support upgrades were delayed or deferred, and the infrastructure was allowed to deteriorate. To stay on schedule, NASA

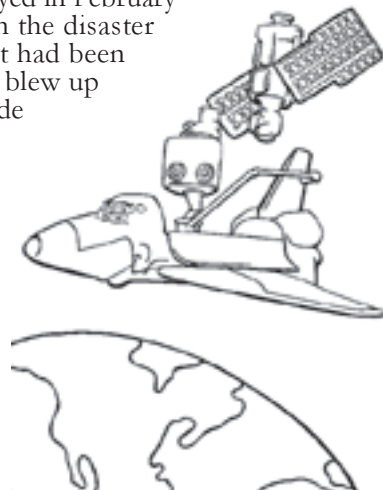
*To page 2...*

## Kwiz Korner

*See and Be Seen* — try this quiz with young children.

- When is it safe to cross the street at a green traffic light?
  - Always, because everyone must stop in the other direction.
  - Only when you see that traffic has stopped for you to cross.
  - Never.
- What should you do when you come to a yellow traffic light?
  - Stop, but if you can't stop safely, keep going — carefully.
  - Speed up so you cross the intersection before the light turns red.
  - Ask for directions.
- A flashing red hand means pedestrians should...
  - walk across the road as quickly as possible.
  - not start to cross the road.
  - wave at passing drivers.
- In the dark, drivers see you best if you wear...
  - white or light-coloured clothing.
  - dark clothing.
  - something retro-reflective.
- Where is it safest to cross the street?
  - At traffic lights and crosswalks.
  - In the middle of the block.
  - Between parked cars.

*Answers on page 6...*



The Space Shuttle: Complacency must never be allowed to take hold when it comes to safety.

Picture: Boeing Kids' Page ([www.boeing.com/company/offices/aboutus/kids/](http://www.boeing.com/company/offices/aboutus/kids/))

See and Be Seen, from page 1.



As part of the *See and Be Seen* theme, children across Canada are being encouraged to visit their local Alliance Tire Professionals dealership this Halloween for a free, retro-reflective armband that can be worn while trick-or-treating.

Halloween may be one of the first times that children must learn to negotiate roads, sidewalks, and other pedestrians at night. To ensure that kids can see and be seen, parents should put makeup on their children rather than masks, and outfit them in brightly coloured, reflective clothing.

Alliance Tire Professionals and the Canada Safety Council encourage parents to have an open dialogue with their children about the importance of road safety. Here are a few tips to keep in mind as the kids hit the streets:

- Teach little ones the definition of “medians,” “intersections” and “pedestrians.” It will help them to understand the world of traffic around them.
- Ensure children know the different traffic signals and when it is safe for them to cross. For example, at a traffic light, make sure they look both ways to make sure all cars have stopped before crossing.
- Kids are naturally fascinated with emergency vehicles. Teach them how the lights and sounds are meant to warn drivers and pedestrians, and not to cross the street if a police car, ambulance or fire truck is approaching.
- School buses also have red flashing lights. Let kids see how drivers must stop when school bus lights flash, and show them when it is safe for them to get on and off the bus. Always accompany young children to the bus stop, and don't let older kids arrive at the stop too early – they may be tempted to wander.
- Remember: the best teacher is your own good example! Obey all traffic signals, and don't jaywalk. □

## Pellet Gun Shooting a Call for Action

In a July 2003 drive-by shooting, a pellet from an air pistol hit a five year-old Toronto boy in the eye. The pellet broke into four pieces and lodged in the centre of the boy's brain near important blood vessels. Doctors could not completely remove the pellet but believe they have saved his sight.

This senseless shooting is not an isolated case. When a fake gun is used in a robbery, the victim at the end of the barrel is in no position to judge whether it is real or not.

Realistic-looking toy guns and replica firearms comprise up to 40 per cent of guns seized by some police departments. SWAT teams have been mobilized to deal with people wielding toy or replica guns, and individuals who threaten to shoot people place themselves at risk of being shot.

Fake guns are also a leading cause of the loss of an eye in children and young adults. Annually, more than 50 children under age 18 require hospital care for air-gun injuries.

The federal Hazardous Products Act bans potentially dangerous toys such as lawn darts, and regulates even plush toys. Yet that Act does not address toy firearms — even though air guns that can fire a pellet at speeds faster than the legal threshold in Canada's firearms law are on the market.

Despite the fact they are inherently dangerous consumer products, anyone can buy an air gun, pellet gun or replica firearm without question at many retail stores.

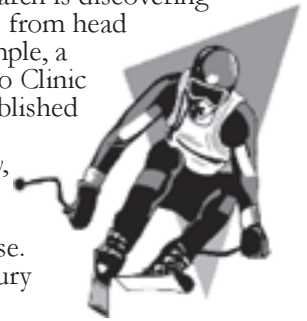
The Canada Safety Council will request that the Federal Minister of Health bring the manufacture and sale of these products under the authority and purview of the Hazardous Products Act. □



Picture from NALD Literacy Collection: *What Do Kids Think Adults Are Made Of?* by S. Alain, illustrated by Fish Griwkowsky, Centre for Family Literacy, Edmonton, AB. ([www.nald.ca](http://www.nald.ca))

Ski Helmets, from page 5.

Increasingly, research is discovering long-term effects from head injuries. For example, a study by the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, published in the May 2003 issue of *Neurology*, linked head injuries to Parkinson's disease. Just one head injury can quadruple a person's risk of developing Parkinson's disease. Symptoms started an average of 20 years after the incident.



## Helmets Don't Replace Personal Responsibility

Wearing a helmet can prevent or reduce the severity of a head injury. However, a helmet does not make a speeding skier or hotdogging boarder immune from disaster. Most helmets are designed to protect from a direct blow to the head at 20 km/h (12 mph) or slower.

Never think you can take more risks because you have a helmet on and therefore are protected. Always ski responsibly and within your ability. Even if you are a good skier, skill alone will not prevent a crash if the skier behind you loses control. □

## Choosing a Ski Helmet

Always use a helmet designed specifically for skiing and boarding. In addition to appropriate safety design, ski helmets offer advantages, such as warmth and an integrated fit with goggles. Make sure the helmet carries a CE, ASTM-2040 or Snell RS-98 certification.

## Answers to Kwiz Korner, page 5

1. B. Look out for traffic no matter where you cross the street and be sure you are seen.
2. A. If the light turns yellow while you are crossing, keep going, carefully.
3. B. Don't start to cross when the red hand is flashing. If you are already crossing, you may continue carefully to the other side.
4. C. Retro-reflective material reflects light back from vehicle headlights. The next best is white or light-coloured clothing.
5. A. Try to cross at traffic lights and crosswalks wherever possible. They regulate traffic, making it safer for pedestrians.

National School Safety Week 2003

# On the Job

## Balance of Priorities a Must for Safety

Working parents sometimes feel as if they are constantly juggling, trying to keep several balls in the air without letting one fall through the cracks.

Canadians are working longer and have more family responsibilities than they did 10 years ago. The 2001

*National Work-Life Conflict Study* found that hours on the job have generally increased, as has the percentage of working Canadians with child care, elder care or both. Over the 1990s, companies downsized, rightsized, restructured and globalized. This often led to job insecurity and heavier workloads. Unpaid overtime work has increased substantially since the previous work-life study in 1991.



important, but rather due to the lack of connection. Memory lapses happen all the time. One way to remember is to develop a routine. However, routines are sometimes broken, so they should build in reminders. For example, drivers who drop off a child at day care on the way to the office should plant a visual cue, such as the child's hat, in the front seat, or place a vital item such as a purse, briefcase or lunch in the back seat with the child.

Before and After School

Many couples arrange their work schedules to avoid arranging child care or leaving older children on their own. However, work schedules typically require parents to leave home before a child goes to school, or to come home after school is out.

### Before and After School

The Canada Safety Council advises parents not to consider letting a child stay home alone until at least the age of 10. The parent must judge whether the child is ready to be alone or with siblings for a short time before or after school. Age alone does not determine whether a child is capable of being left alone. For example, unsupervised teens and pre-teens can sometimes get into more trouble than younger children.

Parents must put into place a structure that assures a safe and supervised environment even when there is no adult at home.

The Canada Safety Council's Web site offers guidance for working parents to prepare older children to be safe at home when an adult can't be there before or after school. CSC also publishes an activity booklet *At Home on My Own* for children 10 and over.

**The Young, the Old — and the Exhausted**

In the 2001 *National Work-Life Conflict Study*, 70 per cent of employees surveyed were parents, 60 per cent had elder care, 13 per cent cared for a disabled relative, and 13 per cent had both child care and elder care responsibilities.

In today's hectic world, it can be hard to juggle family and job priorities. A critical factor in this challenge is safety.

### Think About Safety First

In July 2003, a tragedy that apparently resulted from a disrupted routine and simple forgetfulness shocked Canadians. A Montreal man parked to go to work, leaving his sleeping toddler strapped in her car seat with the windows up. Eight hours later, he returned to find the child dead in his hot car.

A month later, in mid August, two toddlers died in a similar incident in New Jersey. At that time, the US group Kids and Cars said 35 American children had died so far in 2003 from being left in hot cars.

According to Kids and Cars, half of the adults involved were successful working professionals.

Thinking about work can distract caring parents from the safety of their own children because the mind has to juggle its priorities. Our "working memory" deals with what is important here and now. It can hold related ideas more readily than disparate items. Psychologists suggest that thinking about a concern unrelated to the child can cause a parent to forget about a child — not because the child is less

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## New "Green" DDC

### A Web-Based Learning Experience

The latest training industry buzzword is "e-Learning." This philosophy of adult education goes beyond CD-ROM and computer-based training. It uses computers and connectivity to maximum benefit while still offering personal interaction.

For over 35 years, the Canada Safety Council's instructor-led Defensive Driving Course (DDC) has taught drivers how to prevent collisions. The new Green DDC also helps drivers become more environmentally responsible. Now trainees can take the entire course online in French and English.

### Advantages of e-Learning

*Self-Paced* — trainees learn at their own speed but everyone is tested the same way.

*24/7 Access* — e-Learning is available all day, every day via the Internet.

*Motivation* — immediate feedback and individualization; Flash demonstrations add interest.

*Tracking* — the administration component meets occupational safety requirements.

*Lower Costs* — eliminates travel, per diems and learning materials.

*Ongoing Resource* — graduates can continue to use the online knowledge bank.

*Flexibility* — smaller companies and new employees can train as needed.

*Certification* — a wallet card and wall certificate are issued for successful completion.

This course is available to all, from individuals to corporate fleets. Costs depend on the number of participants in your organization taking the course. For more information or to register, visit [www.solutions.ca/gddc-cep](http://www.solutions.ca/gddc-cep), e-mail [Darlene@solutions.ca](mailto:Darlene@solutions.ca), or phone 613-355-5175. □

*Green DDC Online content, page 3...*

*To page 8...*

*Work-Life Conflict, from page 7.*

Alternative work arrangements such as flextime and telework can enable employees to look after the family. Some choose part time employment or job sharing as a way to balance their personal life with their work life.

According to the work-life conflict study, job demands have increased over the last decade. Those who travel on the job spend an average of more than three week nights per month away from home.

To succeed — or just to keep their job — employees work long hours and take work home. With globalization, work hours stretch to cover time zones. Cutbacks and competition mean staffing is kept to a minimum to control costs. A lack of planning time leads to stressful and time-consuming crisis management.

Demanding schedules have led to changes in lifestyle. For instance, men are more involved in child rearing responsibilities than in the past, and share in elder care. Nonetheless, a day still has only 24 hours. More time spent on the job translates into less time for everything else, including family, chores, leisure and sleep.

People who go through life stressed-out and sleep-deprived pose a risk to themselves and others.

### Safety Requires Concentration

The Canada Safety Council and TheSteelAlliance partner an annual driving survey. The 2003 findings suggest Canadian drivers are trying to fit more and more into a day, even if it jeopardizes their safety.

- The number of drivers who admit to at least one act of aggressive driving over the past year has risen

### Soccer Head Injuries

The Canada Safety Council will contribute to a study by the Stollery Children's Hospital in Edmonton, Alberta on soccer head injuries among minor league players.

The world governing body for soccer (FIFA) has approved one type of protective headgear and has suggested the use of protective headgear on a non-compulsory basis. By this move, FIFA in effect acknowledges that soccer entails safety hazards. □

from 84 per cent in 1999 to 88 per cent in 2003. Stress is the main reason cited.

- Over half drove while tired over the past year, including one out of 10 who admit to falling asleep behind the wheel.
- A stunning 97 per cent of drivers in the 18 to 49 age group admit to multi-tasking while driving in the past year.

According to a 1999 study from the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, drivers who hold more than one job, who get six hours or less of sleep a night or who drive between midnight and 6:00 a.m. are more likely to have a drowsy driving crash. About half of the drivers in sleep-related crashes said they did not feel drowsy before they crashed. One-quarter said they had driven while sleepy more than 10 times in the past year. The study concluded that anyone who does not get enough sleep on a regular basis is at risk, and that sleep-deprived drivers have a risk of crash comparable to drinking drivers.

A 1997 Australian study found performance impairments equivalent to a BAC of 0.05 after 17 to 19 hours without sleep. That study reinforced evidence that fatigue from sleep deprivation can compromise speed and accuracy needed for safety on the road and in industrial settings.

People who are fatigued, in a rush, or mentally focused on other issues or tasks create an unsafe environment. Tasks such as driving require concentration, alertness and physical co-ordination. Assuring safe performance of such tasks must enter into the work-life balance.

### Standard for Spectator Protection in Arenas

The scheduled publication date for this new CSA Standard, initiated and funded by the Canada Safety Council, is February 2004.

The draft is currently undergoing pre-approval editing at CSA. This standard enjoys the full support of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Canadian Recreation Facilities Council. □

### Players in the Balancing Act

Many employers know that a flexible, family-friendly workplace helps attract and keep talented workers. A workaholic culture is ultimately demoralizing, counter-productive and unsafe. Policies that enable employees to balance their non-job-related priorities with the job include offering alternative work arrangements and reducing travel and overtime.

Governments have a key role to play. They legislate employment standards, rights and responsibilities, workplace conditions and benefits. As well, they provide a means of redress for workers refused accommodation in terms of work-life balance. As employers, they can also provide a model for other employers.

The most important player in the work-life balancing act is the employee. Each individual must take personal responsibility to have a balanced life — to set personal priorities and act on them. Trade-offs may not be possible

for some Canadians who struggle to make ends meet; for instance, cases where working two jobs barely pays the rent and groceries. Nonetheless, a survey released in August 2003 reports that one-

third of employed Canadians do not even take their allotted vacation days, foregoing an average of eight vacation days a year. □

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