



SAFETY CANADA

The member newsletter of the Canada Safety Council

The All-Terrain Vehicle Boom

The all-terrain vehicle (ATV) first appeared in Canada in the 1970s. It was designed and sold as a multipurpose utility and recreational vehicle.

ATVs are used in farming, forestry, natural resource exploration, law enforcement and peacekeeping. In recent years, they have become very popular for adventure tourism, trail riding and camping.

Between 1996 and 2001, ATV sales in Canada tripled. This explosive growth, largely due to recreational use, has led to the formation of provincial ATV federations. The aging population is a factor. People who enjoy the outdoors, but can no longer walk long distances, can venture into the back country on ATVs to enjoy nature.

Injury Alert

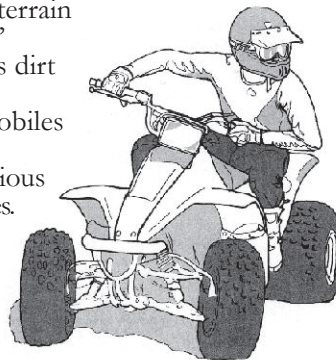
With increased exposure has come a rise in injuries — most of them preventable. Speed, inexperience, improper apparel, non-use of helmets and alcohol are common factors. ATV injuries are more likely to happen to boys aged 15 to 19 than any other group. A US study found that only four per cent of the drivers involved in injury incidents reported having had any training.

In February 2003, the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) reported a 50 per cent increase in hospitalizations due to ATVs over

the past five years (from 1,693 in 1996/1997 to 2,535 in 2000/2001). In the category of sports and recreation, ATV-related activities are now the third most common cause of severe injuries next to cycling and snowmobiling.

According to CIHI, children between the ages of five and 19 accounted for more than one-third (36 per cent) of all ATV-related injuries. Of the 92 ATV-related severe injury admissions in 2000/2001 where alcohol involvement was recorded, 26 per cent had consumed alcohol. The provinces with the largest increases in ATV-related injuries were New Brunswick (90 per cent) and Alberta (89 per cent).

In November 2000, the New Brunswick government established a task force to address issues surrounding the use of ATVs, including public safety. In New Brunswick legislation, the definition of an “all-terrain vehicle” includes dirt bikes, snowmobiles and amphibious machines.



From 1997-1998 to 2000-2001 the number of ATVs registered in that province rose by over 50 per cent. Reported accidents increased by about 75 per cent from 1996 to 2000. Over half of the collisions were on roads and highways, and almost one-third involved an ATV colliding with an on-road vehicle.

Of 112 reported injuries in 1999-2000, children under 16 represented 20 per cent. Almost 1/4 (24.1 per cent) of the total injuries were to the head. In 1999-2000 alone, there were six ATV-related fatalities.

The Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research examined the 20 ATV-related deaths that occurred in that province between July, 1999 and June 2002. Among its findings:

- The majority (55 per cent) occurred in the summer, between July and September.
- Eighty-five per cent of the deceased were the drivers of the ATV.
- At least 60 per cent of the fatalities were due to head injuries.
- Children and teens represented 45 per cent of those killed, including two passengers and seven drivers. The deceased drivers were all from 10 to 15 years old.
- Alcohol was involved in 45 per cent of the deaths.

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Spectator Safety for Indoor Arenas

The Canada Safety Council has a longstanding concern that flying pucks can injure spectators in hockey arenas. Deaths are rare, but injuries — some quite serious — are not uncommon. Most of Canada’s 3,500 community arenas date back at least 30 years. That means that many are due for renovations, when features could be incorporated to protect the fans. However, the absence of a national standard makes it hard to determine what is needed for optimal safety.

In line with its public health and safety mandate, CSC will provide seed funding for a national standard on spectator protection for indoor arenas. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Canadian Recreational Facilities Council (CRFC) have endorsed the development of the standard. CRFC represents the owners and operators of over 3,500 facilities across the country.

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA) will develop a voluntary standard targeted to owners, operators and designers of indoor arenas. Topics in

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President's Perspective

During 2002, there were calls to criminalize drivers who use cell phones, and to lower the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) in the Criminal Code from 0.08 to 0.05. The federal government also proposed criminalization of workplace health and safety law.

Criminalization does not make sense as a public policy direction for safety. The Criminal Code is a last resort, when other countermeasures cannot protect society. Its purpose is to address acts that violate basic societal norms, such as murder, robbery and assault. Existing regulatory tools can deal very effectively with traffic safety and worker safety as long as they are adequately enforced.

Let's look at blood alcohol levels as an example. Almost all Canadian jurisdictions have administrative driver's licence suspensions at a BAC of 0.05 or lower. The procedure is simple and can be carried out by police officers at the side of the road. Most importantly, it protects the public by providing a swift and certain response. In contrast, an officer must take about four hours to lay a criminal BAC charge.

If the criminal BAC were reduced to 0.05, roadside suspensions would be replaced with a legal process that is intricate, punitive and costly.

In an October 1990 ruling known as the Askov decision, the Supreme Court declared that individuals have the right to trial within a reasonable amount of time. Within months of that decision, 50,000 charges were stayed in Ontario; many of these were impaired driving charges.

Charging low BAC drivers criminally would increase the caseload on an already overburdened system. Ontario Chief Justice Roy McMurtry says Ontario has the worst court backlog in the English-speaking world. Supreme Court of Canada Justice Beverly McLaughlin expressed concern that serious trial delays across the country hurt the integrity of the justice system and public confidence in the administration of justice.

There is no evidence that charging low BAC drivers under the federal Criminal Code would prevent more deaths and injuries than measures now in place under provincial and territorial jurisdiction. Indeed, using the Criminal Code would likely mean more drinking drivers go scot free.



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Arena standard, from page 1.

the standard may include netting, glass or other devices to protect spectators from being injured by objects coming out of the area of play.

CSA has been developing standards for more than 80 years, and has a proven record of collaboration with all stakeholders. Working with hockey associations and other interested groups, the adoption of CSA standards for hockey helmets and face protectors has significantly reduced the number of head and eye injuries among players.

The purpose of this standard will be to protect people who watch events at indoor arenas. Millions of Canadians visit these facilities on a regular basis, especially during the hockey season.

This new standard, which should be ready in 2004, will be the first of its kind in the world. Other countries may follow Canada's lead when planning safety features in their arenas. •

Drunk Driving, from page 3.

Drinking and driving is a subset of alcohol-related crashes. In 2000, road crashes involving a driver who had been drinking killed 864 people, or almost 30 per cent of all road fatalities. This is down by one-third from 1995, when 1,296 motor vehicle deaths involved a drinking driver. Of the drinking-driving road fatalities, almost half (422) were drivers whose blood alcohol concentration (BAC) was over 0.08.

In contrast, the United States has seen no substantial change in drink-driving fatalities over the past few years. In 1995, traffic fatalities involving a drinking driver represented 42 per cent of road fatalities (17,732 deaths); in 2000, they represented 41 per cent (17,380 deaths).

Relatively few chronic hard core drinking drivers are responsible for most of the drunk driving problem in this country. High-BAC drivers (i.e. those with BACs over 0.15) represent about one per cent of the cars on the road at night and on weekends. Yet they account for nearly half of all drivers killed at those times. Hard core drinking drivers pose the biggest challenge to further progress.

Most provinces provide assessment and rehabilitation programs to prevent impaired drivers from continuing to endanger the public. Of 12,000 people who attended Ontario's remedial program in its first year, only one returned due to a subsequent conviction.

Provinces are also introducing alcohol ignition interlock, a small breath-testing unit linked to the ignition system. To operate the vehicle, the driver must provide a breath sample. The device, installed at the offender's expense, reduces recidivism by as much as 90 per cent while in use. When combined with rehabilitation, interlock is a very effective countermeasure.

In December 2002, Manitoba introduced a new law believed to be the toughest of its kind in North America. The government will seize and sell the vehicles of repeat drunk drivers.

The statistics show that Canada's approach to impaired driving is working. Criminal sanctions, combined with provincial and territorial countermeasures, are deterring people from drinking and driving. Canada is a leader in the fight against impaired driving, but we cannot be complacent. Resources and hard work are needed to achieve further reductions. •

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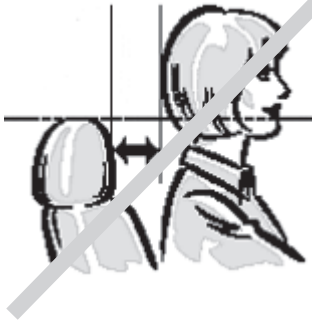
Hard core drinking drivers pose the biggest challenge to further progress.

Intersection

Properly Adjusted Headrests Prevent Injuries

Taking time to properly adjust the headrest in your vehicle can help prevent injury. That's the message from the Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) in its national safety awareness campaign, *Rest up! Save your neck.*

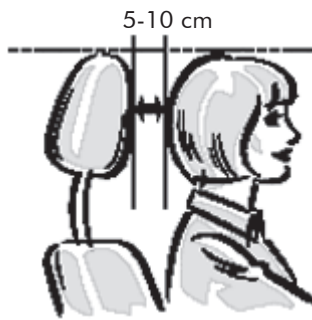
POOR POSITION



Whiplash and other related injuries are painful for collision victims and can end up being costly for insurance policyholders. Insurance companies spend approximately \$4 billion annually to help people recover from soft tissue injuries resulting from motor vehicle collisions. Soft tissue injuries are those that do not involve bones or organs. Rear-end collisions account for 80 per cent of these injuries.

A Canadian study on headrest use, funded by IBC, found that only 14 per cent of Canadian drivers (more women than men) had their headrests adjusted in the 'good' position. For 53 per cent of the drivers observed, the adjustment was so inadequate that it would not protect them from injury in a rear-end collision.

IDEAL POSITION



According to IBC, soft tissue injuries are largely preventable, given that about 75 per cent of the headrests in vehicles today are adjustable. Drivers and passengers can reduce the risk of whiplash simply by raising their headrests to a safe position, where the headrest is level with the top of the head and 5 to 10 cm from the back of the head.

If Canadians followed this simple guideline, the number of neck injuries could be reduced by about 40 per cent. That could save people from unnecessary pain and suffering, and policyholders could end up saving money on their insurance premiums.

Rest up! Save your neck is a national awareness campaign, focusing on educating drivers about the proper adjustment of their vehicle headrest to help prevent whiplash and soft tissue injuries. •

Insurance Bureau of Canada

PSA Wins Award

Rogers Productions has won a 2002 Aurora Gold Award for the production of the "Drive Safe" public service announcement (PSA) it created for the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association and the Canada Safety Council.

The PSA, launched in September 2001, is aired daily on numerous Canadian television stations and is scheduled to run until mid-2003. The Aurora Awards is a US-based international competition designed to recognize excellence in the film and video industries. Rogers Productions won the award in the Public Service/Non-Profit Sponsor category. •

New Alcohol-Crash Stats

Nation-wide, the total number of alcohol-related crash deaths has dropped below 1,000 for the first time since statistics have been available. Between 1988 and 2001, Ontario drinking and driving fatalities dropped by over half, from 439 to 204.

Transport Canada reports that a total of 981 people died in alcohol-related crashes in 2000. This includes off-road vehicles, as well as pedestrians with alcohol in their blood.

- Out of 420 pedestrian fatalities, 38 per cent of those tested for alcohol had been drinking, and most of these had BACs over 0.08.
- Almost nine out of every 10 people killed in alcohol-related crashes (87.4 per cent) were in or on the drinking driver's vehicle (i.e. drivers/operators or passengers).
- Almost nine out of every 10 drivers killed in alcohol-related collisions (87.5 per cent) were male.
- Of all injured snowmobile operators who were killed, 62 per cent had been drinking, as had 49 per cent of the deceased operators of other off-road vehicles.
- Over half (56 per cent) of the drivers killed in single-vehicle crashes tested positive for alcohol, compared to only 20 per cent of those killed in multiple-vehicle crashes.

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Windshield Replacement

Your vehicle's windshield is more than simply a window to let you see where you're driving. It is a critical component of your car's safety system. If it has been replaced, improper installation, poor quality glass or the wrong adhesive could cause serious problems.

The windshield positions the passenger side airbag. If your windshield becomes dislodged because it was improperly installed, the airbag cannot protect the passenger as it should. It also helps support the roof. In fact, the windshield is integral to the structural integrity of the roof.

Urethane, the black rubber-like substance you see around a windshield, is also part of the overall structure of your automobile. It must be strong enough to hold the windshield to the surrounding body. Its strength increases as the new urethane cures and reaches the adequate strength after several hours, depending on the

product used. Butyl, silicon or other caulking is not acceptable.

Humidity and heat enhance the curing process. Therefore, the "safe drive away time" is longest in cold weather, and shortest on hot, humid summer days. The safest installations are performed in shops where environmental conditions are controlled.

If you need to have your windshield replaced, ask about:

- the materials (insist on urethane);
- the drive away time; and
- the warranty.

CSC recommends you use a specialized auto glass shop even if it costs a bit more. A new standard for Auto Glass Replacement has been developed by ANSI, ANSI/AGRSS 002-2002. CSC recommends choosing a shop that recognizes this standard. A substandard job could compromise the integrity of your vehicle and jeopardize your safety. •

ATVs, from page 1.

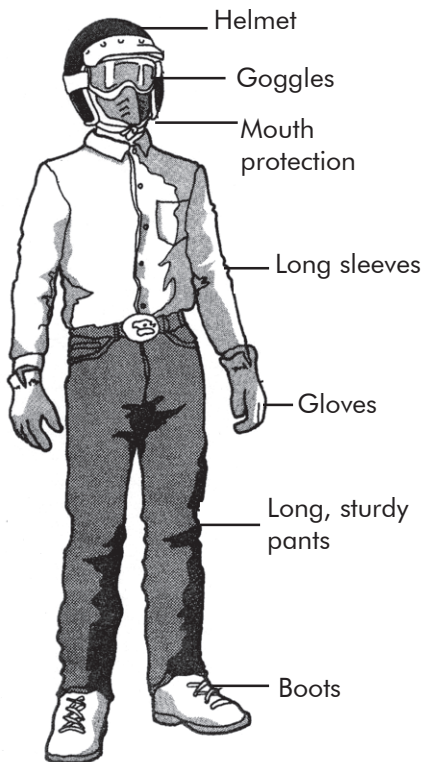
Are ATVs safe?

Obviously an ATV offers less personal protection than a car. It lacks a solid frame, seatbelts and airbags to protect riders in a crash.

In the mid 1980s, three-wheel ATVs were withdrawn from the American and Canadian markets due to safety-related concerns. Some old three-wheelers are still around, but today's ATVs are primarily four-wheelers. These vehicles are built to meet or exceed stringent safety standards in such areas as vehicle stability and brake performance.

ATVs also come in different sizes. Manufacturers clearly warn that children under age 16 should not operate vehicles over 90 cc. Smaller youth models have a reduced speed capability and some have a tether strap that allows a parent to stop the machine. These youth models, used under adult supervision, are designed to be safe for children under 16.

With any vehicle — be it a bicycle, a car, an ATV or an 18-wheeler — there is no substitute for a responsible driver.



Wear a helmet and protective clothing.

Young Riders

An ATV is not a toy. A child involved in a crash could suffer life-altering injuries. If and when your child is ready to use an ATV, match the size of the vehicle to the child, make sure he or she wears protective clothing (including a helmet), and supervise closely. If possible, take the special Canada Safety Council course for children.

Across Canada, regulations vary regarding the minimum age to operate an off-road vehicle on public land. A majority of jurisdictions have legislation that mentions the age of 14, but children who are supervised may operate the vehicle under certain

conditions. Following is the recommendation of the New Brunswick task force:

That youth between the ages of 14 and 16 years be required to obtain an all-terrain vehicle learner's permit, for which they must have parental permission. The learner's permit should only be obtained under the following conditions:

- *must successfully complete a mandatory Canada Safety Council approved training course;*
- *must be supervised at all times by a parent or legal guardian who has successfully completed a Canada Safety Council approved training course and has a valid driver's licence; and*
- *the size of the all-terrain vehicle being operated cannot exceed the size recommended for their age by the manufacturer.*

Regulations controlling ATV use on private property would be difficult if not impossible to enforce. Ultimately, the adults in charge must actively supervise and make sure all safety precautions are taken.

Why does an ATV have such a large seat?

- To carry a passenger.
- To carry a backpack.
- So the operator can move around to balance the ATV.
- All of the above.

C. You have to shift your weight to control the vehicle. A passenger gets in the way of this, increasing the risk of a mishap.

Safe Rider Code

Ride off-road only, never on public roads.

Know your owner's manual.

Wear your helmet.

Protect your eyes and body.

Check the ATV before you ride.

Ride with others — never alone.

Carry no passengers.

Always supervise youngsters.

Keep noise levels low.

Ride sober — no alcohol or drugs.

Lend your ATV to skilled riders only.

Preserve the environment.

Be courteous to all you meet.

Ride within your skill.

Respect riding area rules.

**ALWAYS RIDE SAFELY
AND RESPONSIBLY.**

Sharpen Your Skills

The Canada Safety Council's *ATV RiderCourse* is a hands-on training program led by certified instructors. It offers an enjoyable and structured approach to proper ATV operation. For information contact George Smith at (613) 739-1535, ext. 227.

CSC's interactive CD-ROM, *ATV Smart Rider* addresses how to make manoeuvres, carry cargo, descend or ascend a hill, and ride in winter conditions, as well as basic maintenance and precautions when travelling in a group. You can order it for \$19.95 by calling (613) 739-1535, ext. 223; or use the order form on the Council's Web site (www.safety-council.org). •

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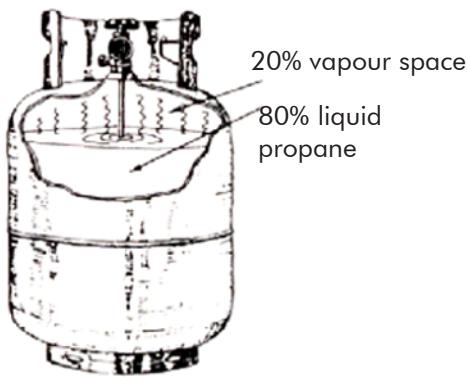
Public Platform

Fuel for Summer Activities

Camping, cottaging and meals on the barbecue are Canada's summertime passions. In addition, more and more Canadians travel by RV during the summer.

Propane is the energy source that often powers these activities. It is versatile, economical and safe, and can be taken where no other fuels can go. Stored as a liquid and used as a gas, it will cook meals, heat the cottage or trailer, ensure a supply of hot water, and even refrigerate food.

Propane appliances are growing in popularity. People who use propane all year round are usually familiar with how to handle it properly, but many Canadians use it mainly while on vacation or for the barbecue. As with any fuel, safety is always important, and special care is needed when reacquainting yourself with a product not used for several months.



Propane is a colourless and odourless gas. A smell is added so you can detect a leak by a strong, distinct odour like rotten eggs or boiling cabbage. Leaking propane is heavier than air and will flow to low-lying areas.

If you suspect a leak, turn off the supply of propane at the cylinder and *leave the area immediately*. Do not turn light switches or flashlights on or off, or operate phones. Once you are well away from the area, phone your service supplier. If you suspect your gas barbecue is leaking or smell an odour shut off the cylinder and do not light the grill.

Propane incidents are rare, in part because of strictly enforced safety regulations. All cylinders must have a decal identifying the contents as a

Transport, Store and Handle Cylinders Properly

Transport cylinders in a secured, upright position, and in a well ventilated space.

When transporting or storing disconnected cylinders, plug or cap all cylinder outlets.

Keep cylinders out of the passenger space or living area of your RV or camper.

Store cylinders outdoors, and off the ground on a base that will not burn.

Never smoke while handling a propane cylinder.

flammable gas. In Canada, they must be inspected and re-qualified or replaced every 10 years. A date stamp on the collar of the cylinder indicates when it was last qualified. Only a qualified technician may fill your cylinder. It is illegal for an attendant to fill an outdated cylinder, or to fill a cylinder beyond 80% capacity.

Anyone who uses propane cylinders must follow the rules when transporting, storing or handling them. Beyond this, it comes down to common sense. Look after your appliances, make sure they are well ventilated, and use them only for what they were meant to do. For instance, burners and ovens are designed for cooking, not to heat your tent or RV.

The Canada Safety Council recommends an annual safety inspection of your whole system, including the appliances.

Look after your propane appliances, make sure they are well ventilated, and use them only for what they were meant to do.

For many summer chefs, gas barbecues are the appliance of choice. They require similar precautions, including a safety check, cleaning and maintenance at the start of the season, and good ventilation around the equipment.

To page 6...

Kwiz Korner

GAS BARBECUE BASICS

- When is it safe to use a barbecue in a garage?
 - If it is too rainy or cold to stay outdoors for long.
 - On the condition that you do not leave it unattended.
 - If it is the location most convenient to the eating area.
 - Never.
- How do you test for leaks?
 - Brush leak detector solution onto connections and valves. Rising bubbles indicate a leak.
 - Use a match or lighter. A flame indicates there is a leak.
 - Smell the apparatus. A distinct odour like rotten eggs or boiling cabbage indicates a leak.
 - Use any of the above methods.
- What maintenance is necessary before using a barbecue for the first time in the spring?
 - Thoroughly inspect, clean and repair it.
 - Replace worn or rusted parts.
 - Check all cylinder connections for leaks.
 - All of the above.
- When lighting your barbecue, which of the following actions comes last?
 - Turn on the burner.
 - Open the lid.
 - Use the igniter switch.
 - Use the service valve on the propane cylinder to turn on the gas supply.
- Where should you store cylinders when they are not in use?
 - In an enclosed space, such as a garage or shed, which you can lock.
 - Outdoors away from sources of ignition, in a well-ventilated area.
 - Under or near the gas grill where they are convenient.
 - Any of the above locations would be safe.

Answers on page 6.

Leave the Pyrotechnics to the Pros

A fire ignited by pyrotechnics killed 97 people at a Rhode Island night club on February 20, 2003. Could this ever happen in Canada?

Years ago, firecrackers and skyrockets were commonplace in Canada. In the early 1970s, firecrackers were completely banned in Canada following public outcries that they were like miniature hand grenades for the pre-teen set.

Canada is Stricter

Fireworks in this country are strictly regulated through the *Explosives Act*, which is administered by the Explosives Regulatory Division (ERD) of Natural Resources Canada. ERD also provides professional safety and legal awareness training and certification for Display Fireworks Supervisors and Special Effects Pyrotechnicians. ERD only permits safe performing fireworks to be manufactured, imported and sold in Canada. Trick fireworks such as snap caps and dangerously powerful items are prohibited. In addition, the *Aeronautics Act*, administered by Transport Canada, specifies requirements for launching high power rockets, including those used in fireworks displays.

Canada allows fireworks in only two categories: Display; and Family or Consumer. Organizers need a permit to set off display fireworks, displays are fired only by experienced, licensed adults and crowd supervision is mandatory. These regulations, which are strictly enforced, prohibit a situation such as that in the Rhode Island incident. Nonetheless, regulation alone cannot protect the public. It must be combined with personal responsibility and awareness.

Regulation for fireworks south of the border is primarily a state responsibility. In some American states, "anything goes" — including bottle rockets designed to be launched from an empty bottle into the air. (This type of firework can easily take a child's eye out.) Under the Federal Hazardous Substances Act, the US government prohibits the sale of the most dangerous types of fireworks to consumers. Fireworks are a business of over US \$200 million in that country.

Pyrotechnics is the manufacture, use and display of fireworks for entertainment.

Injuries Peak on Special Days

Every year, fireworks used by amateurs cause many injuries serious enough to require emergency room treatment. Severe injuries caused by fireworks can include burns, lacerations, amputations, and blindness.

In the US, 10 persons died and an estimated 11,000 were treated in emergency departments for fireworks-related injuries during 2000.



Injuries were 29 per cent higher than in 1999, apparently due to millennium celebrations. About half of the injuries were to children ages 14 and younger.

Most injuries occurred on and around holidays associated with fireworks celebrations, especially July 4th and New Year's Eve.

The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control attributes these injuries to a number of factors, including the fact that high risk types of fireworks, including illegal firecrackers, are often available to the American public. Other major factors are being too close to fireworks when they explode, and unsupervised use by children.

Strict regulations and enforcement have resulted in Canada having far fewer fireworks incidents. Canadians consider control of fireworks to be an important public health and safety issue.

Perhaps because the incidence is relatively low, Canada does not keep national statistics on property damage, deaths or injuries specifically related to fireworks. However, in May 1998 the Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP) examined its data base for injuries related to fireworks or firecrackers. CHIRPP data comes from 10 children's hospitals and six general hospitals across Canada. Its data base contained 175 fire-works-related injuries.

CHIRPP found that children 10 to 14 years of age sustained 42 per cent of the injuries associated with fireworks. Most of the injuries (77 per cent) were to males. The injuries peaked around certain days: Halloween accounted for 20 per cent, all in western Canada; and Victoria Day for 15 per cent, all in central Canada. Nine per cent of the injuries occurred around Canada Day.

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Propane safety, from page 5.

It is absolutely essential for the tubes to be clear and in good repair. Spiders and other insects love to build nests in them and that can cause dangerous blockages.

When using the barbecue, turn the cylinder service valve on first, and turn it off first. When you finish, ensure no propane is left in the hose and then close the burner control valves. Make sure the gas grill is shut off and has completely cooled before covering it.

The Canada Safety Council, in partnership with the Propane Gas Association of Canada, has published a pamphlet entitled *Using Propane - What You and Your Family Need to Know*.

Propane safety is the theme for National Summer Safety Week (May 1 to 7, 2003).

Answers to Kwiz Korner, page 5

1. d. Only use your gas barbecue outdoors in an open, well-ventilated area, at least three metres (10 feet) away from windows or doors, far from combustibles or anything that might obstruct the flow of air around the grill. It is never safe to leave a barbecue unattended, no matter where it is located.
2. a. Use a commercial leak detector solution or a mixture of 50% liquid soap and 50% water. Repair all leaks before using the grill. *Never use matches or lighters to check for leaks!*
3. d. As with all such equipment, make sure your barbecue is clean, in good repair and properly adjusted. If the fittings, flex hose or burners are worn or rusted, replace them. Replace any missing or worn "O" rings. Use a flexible brush (made for the purpose) to clean the tubes between the gas valve and the burner.
4. c. With the lid open, turn the cylinder service valve on. Next, turn on the burner. Only then, use the igniter switch.
5. b. Store cylinders outdoors away from sources of ignition, in a secure, well-ventilated area, always in an upright, vertical position. Never bring cylinders indoors or into an enclosed space, or keep them where they could be exposed to high temperatures.

On the Job

Perfume in the Workplace

Fragrances have been used over the millennia for medicine, religion, romance, and simply to mask foul odours.

However, the composition of today's fragrances is quite different from that of the ancient pharaohs or the "perfumed court" of France's King Louis XV. Until the nineteenth century, scents were made from fragrant resins, flower essences, herbs, spices and other natural ingredients. Now, they are a complex mixture of natural materials and synthetic chemicals. Several hundred chemicals may be used to make a single scented product.

Chemicals used in fragrances can cause health problems such as shortness of breath, headaches and migraines, nausea, muscle pain, and cold-like symptoms. Asthma, emphysema, bronchitis, and allergies can all be adversely affected by the chemicals found in scented products. According to the Lung Association, one study found that 72 per cent of people with asthma had adverse reactions to perfumes.

In most workplaces there are employees who react to fragrances. Employees who like to wear perfume may not realize that they are triggering headaches, wheezing or allergic reactions in fellow employees.

The issue of sensitivity to perfumes in the workplace is complex. Ingredients of different fragrances vary, and allergic individuals may not be affected by all fragrances. In addition, many cleaning and personal care products also have scents. Further research is needed and is being undertaken.

In the meantime, what can workplaces do to protect employees with chemical sensitivities?

First of all, when an employee raises concerns about his or her reaction to perfumes, management should take the matter seriously. Assuming systems are in place to maintain good indoor air quality, the next step is to identify the exact source of the problem and assess its extent. If the source is one or two employees, management should let those employees know the effect their perfume has on other staff and ask them to wear a lighter scent.

If there is a need for a workplace policy, start with a survey of employees to establish a basis for a policy appropriate to the workplace. An effective policy will address the identified problems and will win compliance. The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Web site (www.ccohs.ca) offers practical advice on how to develop and implement a workplace scent-free policy. •



Workplace Safety and the Criminal Code

In May 1992, 26 miners died in an explosion at the Westray Mine in Nova Scotia. One of the recommendations from the public inquiry into that disaster was that the Government of Canada, should look into the accountability of corporate executives and directors for workplace safety and, based on the findings, introduce amendments to legislation.

In November 2002, after a review by the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, the federal government announced plans to introduce amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada.

The Government's summary statement says: *"The criminal law should clearly impose on every person who employs or directs another person to perform work a legal duty to take reasonable care to avoid foreseeable harm to the person or the public. Wanton or reckless disregard of this duty leading to death or bodily harm would be the basis of a charge of criminal negligence."*

The effect of such changes could be to criminalize corporate managers guilty of violations of occupational health and safety standards that result in the injury or death of a worker anywhere in Canada.

The proposed criminalization of workplace health and safety violations is not a simple issue. Occupational health and safety is currently a responsibility of provincial and territorial governments. The federal government says it does not intend to use criminal law to supplant or interfere with their regulatory role. However, adding workplace safety violations to the Criminal Code may have a major impact on the role of existing provincial and territorial legislation and enforcement.

In response to the Westray Mine disaster, Nova Scotia made comprehensive changes to its workplace health and safety laws. In the 10 years since Westray, no workplace disaster of this magnitude has occurred anywhere in Canada. Lessons have been learned from that terrible incident, and appropriate actions have been taken.

The move to criminalize corporate managers for safety offences seems to be based more on political expediency than best practices to assure worker safety.

Why then the move to criminalize corporate managers for safety offences? It seems to be based more on political expediency than best practices to assure worker safety. •

References:

Criminalizing OHS Violations, by Norman Keith. *Accident Prevention*, January/February 2003

Government Response to the Fifteenth Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Human Rights, Justice Canada



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Did you know?

A study by the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy found that higher childhood injury rates were associated with lower income levels. Injury mortality rates for children from the lowest income neighbourhoods in rural areas were almost 2.5 times higher than those from the highest income neighbourhoods. For urban areas, children from the lowest income neighbourhoods had injury mortality rates 4.5 times higher than those from the highest income areas. Injury hospitalizations were 2.5 to 3 times higher for children from the lowest income neighbourhoods compared with the highest income neighbourhoods.

Childhood Injury Rates in Manitoba: Socioeconomic Influences, M. Bronnell et al., Canadian Journal of Public Health, November/December 2002

In 2000, over 1.2 million people died due to road traffic incidents, making it the world's ninth leading cause of death. In some countries, one of every 10 hospital beds is occupied by a victim of a road traffic crash. Although car ownership is greater in industrialized than developing countries, 90 per cent of all traffic fatalities occurred in low- and middle-income societies. The majority of the victims were pedestrians, cyclists and users of public transportation.

World Health Organization, February 11, 2003

The 2001 census data show that truck driving is Canada's most common occupation, employing more than 263,000 people, 97 per cent of which are men. This is 30 per cent higher than in 1991, representing 4.4 per cent of the growth in the national job market. However, Canada's truck-driving force is rapidly aging. The Canadian Trucking Alliance predicts a shortage of skilled drivers within the next 10 years, as truckers in their 50s leave the business.

National Post, February 12, 2003

As many students drive after using cannabis as drive after drinking alcohol according to a study by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. The study found that 20 per cent of Ontario students in grades 10 to 13 (OAC) with a driver's licence have driven within one hour of using cannabis, while 15 per cent report driving after drinking. About one-third of all students in grades 7 to 13 (OAC) report being a passenger driven by a driver who had been drinking. The findings raise a number of serious concerns.

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, March 3, 2003

Fireworks, from page 6.

Sparklers are often considered harmless fun. However, they can burn as hot as 650 C (1200 degrees Fahrenheit) and can ignite clothing. Never replace birthday candles with sparklers on a cake at an indoor party. As with other fireworks, always use them outdoors under adult supervision on a driveway, sidewalk, or other fire-resistant surface. Place used sparklers immediately into a metal container.

Lighting Up the Sky

Over 16,500 Canadians are licensed to conduct exhibition fireworks demonstrations. The safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend an outdoor display put on by some of these trained, licensed professionals. A public display is safer and more spectacular than do-it-yourself fireworks in your back yard. •