

FOR RELEASE
May 17, 2005

#05-132

WHAT'S HOLDING YOU BACK?

WHITEHORSE - May 17 - 23 is National Road Safety Week, and the Transport Services Branch of the Department of Highways and Public Works, together with the National Occupant Restraint Program (NORP) and the RCMP, is asking Yukoners to buckle up for each and every ride in their vehicle.

“Together we can meet the goals of NORP,” Highways and Public Works Minister Glenn Hart said. “By reaching a high seat belt usage-rate and using child restraints properly, we can reduce the number of serious injuries and fatalities in the Yukon. Everyone will benefit from Canada having the safest roads in the world.”

To encourage seat belt and child car seat use, transport services is partnering with NORP on a public awareness campaign. Last weekend a Child Restraint Inspection Clinic, sponsored by Highways and Public Works, was held in Whitehorse. A clinic will also be held at Wye Lake Park in Watson Lake May 21 from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Another clinic will be held in Dawson City later this summer.

Whitehorse resident Kerri Ann Scholz says she knows what NORP it talking about. She strongly believes her family is alive because of seat belts. Two years ago her husband Paul was driving through Porter Creek with the couple’s two young children when their vehicle was struck by a truck. The vehicle was a complete write off, but the Scholz family escaped serious injury.

Scholz said seat belts definitely saved her family that morning and that although they were bruised; her family escaped serious injury or death.

The NORP taskforce is made up of government and road safety stakeholders from across Canada. They aim to make Canada’s roads the safest in the world.

People killed in Yukon car crashes between 1993 and 2002 numbered 88; 48 of those fatalities were not wearing seat belts. RCMP report that approximately half of the people killed in car crashes in Whitehorse were not buckled up, and in rural areas the number is even higher.

Transport Canada reports that in 2002/03 the national seat belt usage-rate was 87 per cent. At 66 per cent, the Yukon’s rate was one of the lowest in Canada.

- 30 -

Contact:

Peter Carr
Cabinet Communications
(867) 667-8688
peter.carr@gov.yk.ca

Marie-Louise Boylan
Communications Analyst
(867) 393-3146
marie-louise.boylan@gov.yk.ca

Julius Debuschewitz
A/Director, Transport
(867) 667-5066
julius.debuschewitz@gov.yk.ca