

Distracted about to surpass impaired driving deaths for seventh year

As OPP get ready to conduct public education and targeted enforcement for its annual distracted driving campaign, it has already reported 12 distracted driving-related deaths so far this year.

Collision data for 2015 is shaping up to see a seventh consecutive year in which inattentive driving surpasses impaired driving as a causal factor in the fatal collisions OPP investigate. Both of these fatality categories are dangerous, preventable driving behaviours that result in the senseless loss of life on Ontario roads every year.

OPP collision data reveals that driver inattention was a causal factor in 12 of this year's 51 fatal collisions to date. In five of those incidents, it was the driver who was inattentive who died. In two incidents, the driver who died did nothing wrong and was driving properly at the time of the collision. Three of the incidents involved a pedestrian being struck by a vehicle. Nine of the deceased were males, three were females and their ages range from 33 to 88.

"Distracted driving is a danger to all road users," commented Chief Superintendent Chuck Cox, commander of the OPP Highway Safety Division. "Fortunately, these same road users are in a position to help put a stop to it. We want to see everyone develop and maintain a complete intolerance for distracted driving and make it the socially unacceptable driving behaviour that it should be."

What can you do to help?

? Be mindful that distracted driving poses a significant threat to the well-being of your family and friends.

? Start conversations about distracted driving with your family, your friends, your colleagues and shed the negative light on it that it deserves.

? If you are in a vehicle being driven by someone who is driving while distracted, always speak up. Be firm and say, "Enough! Too many people are dying because of distracted driving. It needs to stop and you need to stop." Make this your new attitude every day.

? If you see someone driving in a dangerous manner while driving distracted, call 9-1-1 to report them.

? Be self-disciplined every time you get behind the wheel; do not allow yourself to be distracted in any way while you are driving.