

Inattentive drivers linked to twice as many road deaths as impaired drivers

For the first time since Ontario's distracted driving laws were introduced in 2009, OPP is reporting that driver inattention-related road deaths are poised to double the number of impaired-related deaths this year.

As police prepare to launch their Distracted Driving Campaign over the Labour Day weekend, as of mid-August, OPP have investigated 38 road deaths in which an inattentive driver was involved, compared to 19 deaths involving an impaired driver. While both of these driving behaviours are equally threatening to the safety of road users, this latest data has police calling for a heightened awareness of the prevalence of distracted drivers and the risks they pose on the roads. OPP is also calling on Ontarians to develop a similar level of public intolerance of these dangerous drivers that exists of impaired drivers.

When riding with a distracted driver, know that when their eyes are on their phone or they are distracted by something else, those eyes are not on the road and people are not safe.

‘Don't be a passenger of a distracted driver,’ warned OPP Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair. ‘Recognize that they are endangering your life. Speak up and insist that they focus on the road and on safe driving. By not doing so, you are contributing to the problem. Since 2009, our officers have investigated more than 600 road deaths that involved an inattentive driver. Consider how many of those innocent lives could have been saved had someone else in the vehicle intervened.’

‘As families enjoy the last long weekend of the summer, it is important that everyone remember the dangers of distracted driving,’ Community Safety and Correctional Services Minister David Oraziotti commented. ‘Texting and driving is very dangerous, and puts everyone on the road at risk. This Labour Day long weekend, we remind everyone to follow the rules of the road, put down the phone and do their part to ensure a safe end to the summer.’

Over the long weekend, OPP will be out on roads, waterways and trails and will be counting on drivers, boaters and off-roaders to help ensure a safe, enjoyable weekend for everyone.