

OPP launch 'Move Over' campaign over long weekend

OPP are reporting that 2015 marked one of the highest numbers of OPP charges laid against drivers who failed to slow down and move over for roadside emergency vehicles since the Move Over law was enacted in 2003.

OPP laid a total of 2,031 charges last year under Ontario's Move Over law. The only year that saw a higher number was in 2008 when more than 2,800 charges were laid.

Since 1989, five OPP officers have died when they or their roadside vehicles were struck by approaching vehicles.

Over the upcoming long weekend (July 29 to Aug. 1) OPP officers will be conducting a Slow Down, Move Over enforcement and education campaign. With heavy traffic volumes expected throughout the province, highways and roads will see a greater presence of roadside emergency vehicles, making it a particularly important time for drivers to act in accordance with this law.

Drivers are being reminded that in 2015, the law was amended to include slowing down and, on multi-lane highways, moving over for tow trucks parked on the roadside with their amber lights flashing. The law carries a fine range of \$400 to \$2,000 and three demerit points, but the cost is far greater to police officers, other responders and drivers of approaching vehicles who are involved in roadside collisions every year.

In separate OPP-investigated incidents last year (2015), six OPP vehicles, another police vehicle, three ambulances and a tow truck were struck while stopped on the shoulder of a highway or road. The drivers who struck these vehicles were all charged under the Move Over law.

'Making a traffic or emergency stop on the shoulder of a busy highway or road sets a dangerous stage for police officers and our road safety partners, due to the risk of being struck, injured or killed by approaching vehicles whose drivers are not paying full attention,' observed Deputy OPP Commissioner Brad Blair. 'We are counting on all drivers to help ensure the safety of everyone by slowing down and, on multi-lane highways, safely moving over.'

'We hope that all Ontarians have a safe Civic Day Long Weekend, and that those on our roads drive safely,' Community Safety and Correctional Services Minister David Orazietti said. 'We want to remind everyone of the importance of slowing down and, on multi-lane highways, moving over if it is safe to do so, when emergency vehicles - including tow trucks - are on the side of the road.'

'When you see emergency lights on the shoulder, moving over is not only the safe thing to do, it is the law,' he added. 'Motorists need to be aware of what's happening on our highways and ensure they do their part to keep our roads safe for everyone.'

Heading into the long weekend, OPP is reporting that the four days from July 23 to 26 have been particularly tragic, with nine people having died on OPP-patrolled roads. Two of the collisions resulted in multiple fatalities. Among the deceased were seven vehicle occupants, a motorcyclist and a cyclist.

Police are reminding the public that officers will be out on roads, waterways and trails over the weekend and are counting on Ontarians and tourists to stay safe so that everyone can enjoy the weekend and make it home safely.