

Police will be cracking down this weekend on seatbelt use

A close look at seat belt-related road deaths on OPP-patrolled roads in recent years suggest that males place far less importance on wearing a seat belt than females do.

Over the past five years (2011-2015), 332 people have died in collisions on OPP-patrolled roads as a result of not wearing a seat belt. According to OPP data, 261 of the victims were males and 71 were females.

As OPP officers prepare for their Spring Seat Belt Campaign over the Easter long weekend, they are sharing some insight into seat belt attitudes and looking into why they believe there have been almost four times as many male seat belt-related deaths as female deaths in the same causal factor category.

“Our data suggests a strong presence of male drivers and male passengers who believe that they are at a lower risk of being involved in a collision than other people, and who do not see a need to wear a seat belt,” OPP Commissioner Vince Hawkes observed. “This attitude works against our efforts to save lives on our roads.”

“Ontario's roads are among the safest in North America and it is everyone's responsibility to keep them that way,” Community Safety and Correctional Services Minister Yasir Naqvi commented. “Everyone knows that seat belts save lives, so buckle up. It only takes a moment, but can make all the difference. Do your part to help the dedicated OPP officers keep our roads safe for everyone this weekend and throughout the year.”

All drivers and passengers need to acknowledge the fact that if they do not buckle up they are at a significantly greater risk of dying in a collision that can be caused by the irresponsible actions of a distracted, impaired or aggressive driver.

OPP data also revealed that over the past five years (2011-2015), more than three times as many unbuckled drivers (252) died in collisions as unbuckled passengers (80). This statistic is also of concern to police.

When it comes to seat belt use, they look to drivers in particular to set a good example for their passengers – especially children, young drivers and young passengers whose decision to wear a seat belt over the course of their lives may be significantly influenced by the attitudes of their parents, other family members and friends. Police observed that passengers of all ages are more likely to buckle up when they see the driver do it.

When involved in a serious motor vehicle collision, getting ejected from a vehicle almost always ends in death.

Encouraging family and friends to wear a seat belt can have a significant positive influence on their decision to wear a seat belt. Start talking about it!

While the number of seat belt-related deaths among children younger than 16 years of age remains the lowest of all other age groups, it is unacceptable to OPP when even one child dies as a result of this causal factor.

Between 2011 and 2015, nine children died because they were not properly restrained in the vehicle. Parents and child caregivers need to ensure that children are always safely buckled in a child restraint appropriate to their age and size.

Whether it is a car seat for infants or toddlers, or a booster seat, make sure it is the right seat.

Over the Easter weekend, OPP are counting on all drivers to help make it a safe time for everyone travelling on Ontario roads.

Besides lack of occupant restraint, OPP officers will be conducting enforcement and education activity associated with other negative road user behaviours, which include aggressive driving, driving while impaired by drugs or alcohol and driving while distracted.