

Road Safety Week kicks off with OPP reminder to Follow 'Big 4' Rules

By Riley Murphy

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This week marks the start of Road Safety in Canada, and the OPP is alerting drivers to dangers on the road today, and every day.

Observed from May 12 to 18, this year's campaign theme is 'Road Safety - Every Road. Every Day. Everyone.'

Provincial Constable Ian Michel says they are treating this week 'as we treat all weeks in Caledon.'

'We expect every driver on every road, everyday to adhere to the laws and rules of safe driving. Don't speed, Use your seatbelt, stay off your phone and drive sober. The message and expectation remains the same for drivers. The only way to ensure we have safe roads is for all drivers to buy-in and follow the rules,' says Michel, adding that they call these laws the 'Big 4.'

Unfortunately, he says, they are still seeing many drivers show 'little regard' for safe driving practices, and they continue to stop and charge motorists across Caledon with 'Big-4 offences.'

Serving for 25 years, Michel says it still 'boggles his mind' how people haven't realized not only how dangerous these driving behaviours are, but how they affect other people's lives.

Even with distracted driving and seatbelt laws introduced decades ago, Michel says they still see people using their phones regularly and not wearing seatbelts.

'With all of the hand-free technology in cars now there is no excuse to be holding your phone for any reason while driving,' he adds.

'Caledon residents are seeing it too, and they're letting us know about it. Everyday we receive numerous traffic complaints from residents and drivers all over Caledon about bad driving behaviour,' says Michel. 'We can't keep up.'

Michel explains that they have amalgamated their Community Response Unit and Traffic Unit into a new Community Mobilization Unit and that officers are working every day on traffic enforcement.

They have dedicated Commercial Motor Vehicle inspectors attached to the unit, providing everyday coverage for commercial motor vehicle enforcement.

He says they continue to try to educate the public about things such as passenger seatbelt use and child restraints, conduct R.I.D.E. checkpoints daily, and work with their community partners to educate the public about the dangers of impaired driving.

Michel adds that speed enforcement is done every day, and they still impound vehicles for stunt driving on a regular basis.

'It is frustrating, but the vast majority of drivers are safe and adhere to the rules. Now we just need the others to follow suit and participate,' says Michel. 'We need the drivers of Caledon to help us by doing their part.'

'We take road safety very seriously in Caledon. We are lucky to have some very dedicated officers in our detachment that take it seriously as well, and amazing residents that participate in committees and attend our traffic safety meetings to share their thoughts and what they are seeing on the roads of Caledon to help us plan enforcement and education activities.'