

## Speed related deaths have more than doubled from last year

Highway deaths with speed as a causal factor have doubled in 2014 compared to the same period last year, according to recent data released by Ontario Provincial Police (OPP).

OPP is calling on all drivers, boaters and off-road vehicle (ORV) enthusiasts to work together to make the upcoming Canada Day holiday weekend a safe one.

According to data, speed-related deaths are currently in the lead when compared to collision fatalities in which distracted or impaired driving were causal factors. Of the 113 people who have been killed on OPP-patrolled roads so far this year (up to June 15), speed was a factor in 33 of those deaths. Distracted driving is in second place at 24 fatalities and impaired driving related deaths are at 12.

“Last year, speed was a factor in more than 11,000 collisions we investigated, so there is no question that speed threatens the safety of all road users,” said Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair, provincial commander of Traffic Safety and Operational Support for OPP. “As people make travel plans for the upcoming Canada Day weekend, drivers need to remember that speeding, following too closely, making unsafe lane changes, road rage and failing to yield right-of-way are all aggressive driving behaviours that injure and kill people of all ages every year.”

“In 2013 our officers laid nearly 300,000 speeding charges across the province,” commented Chief Superintendent Don Bell, commander of the OPP Highway Safety Division. “Almost 3,000 of those charges involved the motorist driving 50 kilometres per hour or more over the posted speed – one of the most aggressive, reckless and dangerous driving behaviours on our roads. The motoring public has the right to be safe and it is an unacceptable injustice to all safe drivers and innocent passengers when aggressive drivers display this type of behaviour and endanger everyone.”

With Canada Day weekend approaching, OPP is reminding all drivers who will be travelling on Ontario roads, waterways and trails that they have the ability to make it an incident-free weekend. Every driver is in control of their behaviour and OPP acknowledges that the majority of people who operate a vehicle, boat or off-road vehicle take this responsibility seriously.

Because of the irresponsible few who do not, police are counting on members of the public to take charge of the situation when they are with someone who is driving unsafely and placing themselves and other people at risk of death or serious injury.

Never feel guilty about asking them to stop, encourage them to drive safely and remind them that the safety of other people is at stake. This is one more way to raise awareness and influence positive driving behaviour among motorists, boaters and off-roaders. Also, if you suspect that someone is operating a motor vehicle, boat or ORV while impaired, call 9-1-1. In doing so, you are playing a very important role in helping the OPP save lives. By working together, the OPP and the public can ensure that everyone has a safe, enjoyable Canada Day weekend.