

Security Spotlight

An informational Guide for Securitas Canada Clients and Employees



March 2015

Securitas Canada Limited

Number 132

Drive Safely - Lives Are in Your Hands



Harry's new car was the joy of his life. It was sleek, shiny, and powerful and he loved the roar of the engine. Harry was tired and eager to get home. It was 5 A.M. and the road was deserted. Harry thought, "What's the harm in putting on a little extra speed?" So, even though the posted speed limit was 50 KM per hour, Harry sped up to 70 KM per hour. Yawning, he reached for his cup of coffee. Suddenly there was a sickening thud and Harry looked up through his cracked windshield to see a man flying through the air and landing on the road. Harry slammed on the brakes and bemoaned, "How did this happen? How did my beautiful car become a murder weapon?" Sadly, Harry's story is not uncommon. Statistics Canada reported in 2,158 fatalities from motor vehicle accidents in 2011. MADD Canada reported that motor vehicle accidents are a leading cause of death among people ages 16-25 and drugs and/or alcohol are a factor in 55% of those crashes, that's over half! How can you avoid becoming one of these statistics?

Know the Causes

The major factors causing many traffic accidents are:

- Drowsy driving: The National Sleep Foundation reports that drowsiness causes one out of every six fatal traffic accidents.
- Distracted driving: Distraction is: tuning your radio, waving at a neighbor, reaching for a drink, looking at your GPS or cellphone,

talking to a friend in the car, etc. In short, any time you are not looking at the road and keeping your hands on the steering wheel, you are distracted. Distracted driving increases your odds of having an accident by as much as 23 times!

- Aggressive driving: We have all seen them, drivers who weave in and out of traffic, cut off other drivers, fail to yield, tailgate, and display anger by horn honking, rude gestures, or shouting.
- Impaired driving: Driving can be impaired by anything that reduces your attentiveness and reaction time, such as; cell phone use, substance abuse, blinding sun glare, or drowsiness.
- Unsafe driving: Unsafe driving encompasses a long list of unsafe behaviors; these are a few of the most common: forgetting to use your signals when turning or changing lanes, forgetting to look in your mirrors and over your shoulder when changing lanes, driving too fast or too slow, failing to stay in your lane, passing in a no-passing zone, making sudden stops on an open stretch of road, failing to accelerate to highway speed when merging, failing to properly decelerate on a highway exit, failure to ensure that the vehicle is in proper working order, not wearing a seatbelt.

Know How to Cope

TELUS has launched “Thumbs Up. Phones Down” a campaign to increase awareness of distracted driving and also encourages Canadian drivers to pay attention to the road while they are driving. A survey done by TELUS found that 36 per cent of Canadian drivers admitted to illegally using their cellphones while behind the wheel. The survey also found that while 70 per cent of Canadian passengers are uncomfortable with drivers using their cellphone while driving, nearly a quarter of them don't speak up. So, how do you defend yourself against unsafe drivers? Obey traffic laws. If you do not remember them, contact your province's motor vehicle department and request a copy of the Driver's Manual (or download the manual online). Drive defensively. Securitas offers an excellent course called the “Securitas Safe Driving Program.” This course is divided into two parts; part one can be instructor-led or can be reviewed online through the Securitas Online Academy or Learning Management System (LMS). The second part of the course involves a monitored road test. Both parts of the course are mandatory for any security officer whose duties require the operation of a motorized vehicle. No matter how good a driver you already are, there is always room for improvement. Securitas encourages all of our employees to improve their driving skills and knowledge. Many public libraries have educational materials on how to become a better driver. You should also take to heart these ten tips from the Teen Health Organization.

1. **Plan Your Route:** Know where you're going ahead of time. Tune into a local media source to be well informed about weather and road conditions or traffic activity on your route. For longer trips, include a rest stop every two hours. Stop sooner if you are tired.

2. **Maintain Your Vehicle:** Read the owner's manual and follow the recommended schedule for maintenance service. Conduct your own routine check-ups on: tires, brakes, lights, wipers, and fluid levels. For good visibility make sure your mirrors, windows, and outside lights are clean. Secure any loose items or cargo that could become a hazard.

3. **Focus Your Attention:** Being well rested, alert, and attentive enables you to respond quickly. Take a break if you have difficulty focusing. Remain calm—don't let your temper or frustration cause you to act recklessly.

4. **Minimize Your Distractions:** Keep your hands on the wheel, your eyes on the road, and your mind on the task of driving. Do not let people, objects, or events inside or outside your vehicle distract you.

5. **Know Your Surroundings:** Look out for trouble. Scan the roadway continually for hazards. Keep your eyes moving, looking from one side to the other. Know what is happening well ahead of you, watch for brake lights. Know what is to the rear and sides of your vehicle.

6. **Share Your Space:** Many crashes could be prevented if drivers behaved courteously to other road users. You share the road with drivers of various ages and skill levels. You also share the road with pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, and vehicles of varying sizes. Be aware of special needs and limitations of other drivers and roadway users.

7. **Watch Your Speed:** Posted maximum speeds are for ideal driving conditions. Adjust your speed for traffic, road, and visibility conditions, or when not operating at your best. Higher speeds magnify your errors and provide less time to identify and react to a hazard; stopping distances are longer and crashes are more severe.

8. **Keep Your Distance:** Give yourself room to maneuver. You'll need it in a crisis. To protect yourself, keep a large “safety cushion” around your vehicle. This will enable you to change lanes safely and give you room to take evasive action in emergencies. Keeping a safe distance between vehicles increases your ability to see and to be seen by other drivers.

9. **Signal Your Intentions:** Driving can be a stressful business. Be courteous and signal your intentions so other road users know what you plan to do next. Be predictable. Don't hesitate to use your horn or headlights to establish eye contact, when needed. Remember to express your thanks, by a wave of the hand or a flash of your lights.

10. **Always Wear Your Seat Belt:** Seat belts are your best defense in a crash. Being properly secured keeps you in control of your vehicle and ready to react to a hazardous situation. So buckle up and make sure your passengers do the same. Seat belts save lives!

Driving Programs

Safe driving is not a reaction to hazards, but the recognition of potential hazards. That means seeing situations not only for what they are, but for what they could become. Good drivers constantly evaluate the driving environment and look for the unexpected. They remain in control of the situation. Young drivers Canada offers courses for both fully licensed drivers and new drivers. Some types of courses offered include:

- Advanced collision avoidance program
- Driver education program
- Driver improvement course
- Defensive driver course
- Winter driving program
- Fleet program
- Driver assessment for seniors

No matter what age you are, you can always improve your driving abilities. For more info go to www.yd.com