

Speed and Motor Vehicle Collisions

- Each year in the Capital Region there are 25,000 motor vehicle collisions.
- More than one in four – or over 6,000 – results in an injury or death.
- Individuals involved in motor vehicle collisions in intersections are far more likely to be seriously injured.
- Two out of three injury collisions happen in intersections.
- One in every four collision, or 28 per cent, involves driving at a speed that is unsafe for the road conditions.
- Far too many collision victims are seen in emergency departments and hospitals.
- Thousands of residents are treated each year in Alberta Health Services (AHS) emergency departments and hospitals for injuries sustained in motor vehicle collisions.

- In the Edmonton area between 2003 and 2008, emergency department visits from motor vehicle collisions averaged more than 7,200 annually, and hospital stays averaged more than 540 annually.
- These injurious collisions are preventable.

- Speed determines the severity of a collision and it is literally a matter of life and death.
- A study from Australia found the risk of dying in a crash approximately doubles for each 5 km/h increase in speed.

Using the example of an increase in speed from 50km/h to 60km/h, the following results:

- Stopping distance increases from 25 meters to 33 meters
- Risk of injury crash increases by 44 per cent
- Risk of a serious injury crash increases by 73 per cent;
- Risk of a fatal crash increases by 107 percent.

For pedestrians speed is particularly lethal.

If hit by a vehicle traveling at:

- 30 km/h the survival rate is 95 per cent
- 50 km/h the survival rate is 45 percent
- 60 km/h the survival rate is 10 per cent.

Exceeding the posted speed limit or driving too fast for the road conditions can have real consequences.

Speeding:

- Reduces your ability to steer around obstructions or curves;
- Extends both your reaction time as well

as the distance required to stop your vehicle;

- Reduces your ability to stop for red lights and stop signs.
- Decreases your field of vision and peripheral vision;
- Increases your chance of losing control of the vehicle;
- Reduces effectiveness of seatbelts, airbags and side impact beams;
- Causes brakes, tires, steering and suspension to become less effective;
- Reduces the effectiveness of roadside hardware such as barriers, crash cushions and bridge rails;
- Increase the probability of death or injury if there is a crash.

OVER 400 PEOPLE ARE KILLED AND 23,000 ARE INJURED IN SOME 90,000 MOTOR VEHICLE COLLISIONS IN ALBERTA EACH YEAR.

Traffic collisions cost Albertans \$10 million every day and more than \$3.8 billion a year.

“Most of these collisions could have been prevented if drivers thought more about what they are doing behind the wheel,” says Glen Jakubowski, Coalition of Alberta Auto Insurers.

As far as bumper stickers go, many of us have favorites:

- > My karma ran over your dogma
- > Live your dreams
- > If you can read this you're driving too close

Whatever the posted speed limit, some people feel the need to exceed it.

What many speeders may not realize is that speeding just a little can increase the risk of collision and the potential for injury.

It also results in higher fuel consumption at a time when fuel prices in are reaching record highs.

In addition, there is a close link between speeding and the seriousness of collisions.

Increasing your speed by just 10 km/h can make the difference between whether a collision causes broken bumpers or broken bones.

Slow down in snow

As winter takes hold, it's a good time to consider whether you'll get there faster by speeding, or whether you'll get there at all.

Speeding is one of the leading contributors in a large percentage of collisions.

Drivers are reminded that posted speed limits are based on ideal driving conditions.

In winter driving conditions, it is even more important to slow down.

Stopping distances increase, and there are increased dangers associated with rapid lane changes or rapid acceleration.

THE MOST IMPORTANT SAFETY FACTOR FOR DRIVERS TO REMEMBER IS THAT ANY AMOUNT OF SPEEDING CAN HAVE CONSEQUENCES ON TRAFFIC SAFETY.

When the traffic around you is speeding, rather than "going with the flow," police encourage drivers to help initiate a safer flow of traffic by driving within the posted limit, at a speed that is safe for the conditions.

Report problem areas

Another way drivers can increase traffic safety is to report problem areas to police.

The Photo Radar Unit will respond to general speeding problems, and the Traffic Section maintains a database to track traffic requests sent in by citizens.

Reporting problems may also improve traffic operations.

The most important safety factor for drivers to remember is that any amount of speeding can have consequences on traffic safety.

To conserve energy and preserve life, drive safely - within the posted limit.