

Niagara Region Road Safety Campaign Backgrounder



The Niagara Region has one of the highest numbers of fatal and serious injury motor vehicle collisions per capita compared to other Ontario regions. The Regional Niagara Road Safety Committee (RNRSC) has determined that speed, driver error and impairment are the main causes of these serious collisions with most involving male drivers (75%) and occurring on rural roads (58%).

The RNRSC, with representatives from CAA Niagara, Niagara Region Public Health Department (NRPHD), Niagara Region Public Works Department (NRPWD), and Niagara Regional Police Service (NRPS), was formed in 2003 to address Niagara road safety issues. The committee developed a five-year (2004-2008) strategic plan to reduce fatal and serious injury motor vehicle collisions in Niagara by 10%. The plan uses a comprehensive injury prevention approach to road safety that includes: education, enforcement, engineering and advocacy. The Think and Drive road safety social marketing campaign (Think and Drive), targeted to drivers and road users, is one part of the overall RNRSC road safety strategy.

The goal of Think and Drive is to raise awareness about the road safety problem in Niagara, to educate drivers about how they can make a difference, and to influence their driving attitudes and behaviours. It was piloted in one of twelve Niagara area municipalities in 2006. Evaluation results showed that the campaign made respondents more aware of the road safety problem in Niagara, more knowledgeable about how they could improve road safety, and increased their intentions to change their driving attitudes and behaviours.

Think and Drive has been expanded across the Niagara region based on the pilot project. The 15-month campaign was launched on October 16, 2007 along with the interactive website; www.thinkanddrive.net.

The website features a road safety challenge where drivers can discover their personal "risk factor" to find out what may be lurking in their own driving behaviour. There is also a Niagara collision map that demonstrates how widespread the serious collisions are across the Niagara region. The site provides updated road safety information, community news and events, and introduces various contests that will continue throughout the campaign.

Many community partners are involved in the campaign to promote road safety throughout Niagara. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation provides ongoing assistance and support. Working together with provincial, regional and municipal governments and services, local media, business associations, employers, schools, community groups, individuals and other stakeholders to support, implement and promote Think and Drive, we are encouraging drivers to make Niagara's roads safer by taking personal responsibility for road safety.

For more information, please contact Linda Beyer; Chair, Regional Niagara Road Safety Committee at 905-688-8248 ext. 7360 or linda.beyer@regional.niagara.on.ca.

