



Royal Canadian
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news release

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Annual Spring Seatbelt Enforcement Campaign Set for May

(EDMONTON) - In May, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and other policing partner agencies will conduct Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) campaigns in their jurisdictions. Traffic members will be at various locations throughout the province focusing on seatbelt and child safety seat infractions.

"For the spring 2004 campaign, we will continue our efforts to inform the motoring public of the serious consequences of not properly wearing seat belts", says RCMP Traffic Services Inspector David Mitchell, "Our provincial goal is to achieve and maintain a 95 per cent seat belt wearing rate in all communities across Alberta by 2010. Achieving this would significantly impact our death and injury rates from motor vehicle collisions."

Inspector Mike Derbyshire, Support Branch of the Edmonton Police Service agrees. "Traffic safety continues to be a priority issue for us. As part of the Edmonton Approach, our overall objective is to reduce injuries and save lives and one aspect includes ensuring that everyone, including children are properly restrained."

"Far too often we see the devastating impact of non-compliance regarding seat belt use", says Inspector Bill Sherlock of the Calgary Police Traffic Section. "We need to continue our efforts at informing the public of the serious consequences of not properly using occupant restraints. Bottom line, wear your seat belt, it may prevent a serious injury or even save your life."

Ensuring the public is aware of the potential serious consequences of not properly wearing seat belts is the focus of a graphic awareness campaign supported by the Alberta Occupant Restraint Program. Research and data supports the use of hard-hitting campaigns, similar to graphic ads run in Australia.

"We are serious about saving lives and reducing the costs associated with unbelted drivers and passengers involved in collisions", said Ed Stelmach, Minister of Alberta Transportation. "While most Albertans comply with the law, this tough message needs to get to those who choose not to buckle up."

The Alberta Occupant Restraint Program, the provincial coordinating body for occupant restraint issues, has supported the spring and fall provincial STEP campaigns since 1996. Police and regional health authority staff team up to provide education and communication support for the STEP campaign. The enforcement component is managed on a local basis by the responsible police service.

Partners include: Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research, Alberta Health and Wellness, Alberta Transportation, Insurance Bureau of Canada, KIDSAFE Connection, Calgary Police Service, Edmonton Police Service, municipal police services, Regional Health Authorities, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, St John Ambulance and Transport Canada. The central objective is to achieve a minimum seatbelt usage rate of 95 per cent in the province by the 2010.

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