

**Providing safe and secure communities**

October 18, 2007

## **Increase in traffic collisions and injuries calls for action**

### ***Driver responsibility key to Alberta's Traffic Safety Plan***

*Edmonton...* Alberta's 2006 traffic collision statistics prove that Albertans need to be more careful when driving and cut down on distractions. The numbers show more than nine out of 10 traffic collisions in Alberta can be attributed to driver error.

Statistics show 25,964 people were injured in traffic collisions in 2006 - 1,460 more than in 2005. Traffic collisions increased nearly 15 per cent for a total of 142,592. A total of 453 people died in collisions, 13 fewer than in 2005. Compared to five years ago, the number of vehicles on Alberta roads has increased by almost 400,000.

"Despite the huge influx of people into Alberta and a dramatic increase in traffic on our roads, fatalities for 2006 are down. But I am still deeply concerned about the increase in collisions involving preventable injuries," said Luke Ouellette, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. "Drivers really need to pay more attention to what they're doing behind the wheel - we could prevent injuries and save more lives if people would stay alert, stay sober, slow down and buckle up."

Driver error was listed as a contributing factor in 90.6 per cent of all traffic collisions, unchanged from the previous year. Following too closely (29.2 per cent), running off the road (15.1 per cent), and turning left across the path of an oncoming vehicle (12.5 per cent) were most frequently identified as actions contributing to collisions causing injury or death. Nearly 60 per cent of all casualty collisions occurred when road surface conditions were dry.

When accounting for population and licensed drivers, the fatality rate decreased while the injury rate increased. In terms of overall traffic levels, traffic volumes have increased by 16.1 per cent over the last five years (2002-2006). Population, vehicles and drivers have also increased over the last five years; population by 8.4 per cent, vehicles by 16 per cent and operators by 8.2 per cent. Of the 12 provinces and one territory for which information was available, five had a higher fatality rate than Alberta in 2005 (most recent comparison data) and six had a higher injury rate.

The Government of Alberta is committed to reducing the number of traffic collisions and improving traffic safety through the *Alberta Traffic Safety Plan: Saving Lives on Alberta's Roads*.

Improving traffic safety is one of the actions under Premier Ed Stelmach's plan to provide Albertans with safe and secure communities. Other priorities for the government are to govern with integrity and transparency, improve Albertans' quality of life, manage growth pressures, and build a stronger Alberta.

To view the 2006 Alberta Traffic Collision Statistics, or the *Traffic Safety Plan* visit:  
<http://www.infratrans.gov.ab.ca>

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## 2006 Alberta Traffic Collision Statistics highlights

During 2006...	Every day in 2006 approximately...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 453 people were killed as a result of traffic collisions.</li><li>• 25,964 people were injured in traffic collisions</li><li>• A total of 142,592 collisions occurred.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 person was killed.</li><li>• 71 people were injured.</li><li>• 391 traffic collisions were reported.</li></ul>

### ALBERTA TRAFFIC COLLISIONS 2002-2006

Severity of Collision	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
Fatal	404	392	339	321	322
Non-Fatal Injury	18831	17726	17248	18447	20152
Property Damage	123357	106088	94966	94589	95834
<b>Total Reportable Collisions</b>	<b>142592</b>	<b>124206</b>	<b>112553</b>	<b>113357</b>	<b>116308</b>
Number Killed	453	466	387	385	372
Number Injured	25964	24504	24249	26426	28989
<b>Total Number of Casualties</b>	<b>26417</b>	<b>24970</b>	<b>24636</b>	<b>26811</b>	<b>29361</b>

### WHO WERE THE VICTIMS?

Traffic Fatalities (%)		Traffic Injuries (%)	
246	Drivers (54.3)	15812	Drivers (60.9)
111	Passengers (24.5)	7098	Passengers (27.3)
39	Pedestrians (8.6)	1307	Pedestrians (5.0)
3	Bicyclists (0.7)	588	Bicyclists (2.3)
31	Motorcyclists (6.8)	789	Motorcyclists (3.0)

23	Other road user class/unspecified (5.1)	370	Other road user class/unspecified (1.4)
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## SPECIAL ROAD USER CLASSES

### Pedestrians

Based on population, pedestrians between the ages of 15 and 19 were most likely to be involved in a crash. Pedestrian casualty collisions were most likely to occur during the evening rush hour. Of pedestrians involved in injury collisions 17.3 per cent had consumed alcohol, compared to 43.8 per cent of pedestrians in fatal collisions.

### Motorcycles

There were 32 people killed in collisions involving motorcycles. Motorcycle drivers under the age of 25 were most likely to be involved in casualty collisions. Compared to other drivers, motorcyclists were more likely to have consumed alcohol before the crash. Compared to drivers in total casualty collisions, motorcycle drivers were more likely to run off the road or pass improperly.

### Truck Tractors

In 2006, there were 67 people killed and 813 injured in collisions involving truck tractors. Compared to drivers of other vehicles, truck tractor drivers were more likely to run off the road or make an improper lane change but less likely to have consumed alcohol before the crash.

### Trains

In 2006, three people were killed and 30 people were injured in crashes in which a train was involved.

### Bicycles

Young bicyclists, 15-19 years of age, were the group most frequently involved in bicycle casualty collisions. Compared to other drivers, bicyclists were more likely to disobey a traffic signal or fail to yield the right-of-way at an uncontrolled intersection.

## WHEN DID THE COLLISIONS OCCUR?

August and September saw the most fatal collisions. October recorded the highest number of injury collisions. The highest number of property damage collisions occurred during November. There are more collisions on Friday than any other day of the week. The afternoon rush-hour period accounted for the highest number of crashes.

## HOW DOES ALBERTA COMPARE TO OTHER PROVINCES?



### Looking back...

- Fatality rates have decreased from last year.
- Injury rates have increased over the past year.
- Property damage collision rates have increased over the past year.

## WHERE DID THE COLLISIONS OCCUR?

Over three quarters of all collisions occurred in urban areas. Fatal collisions were more frequent in rural areas.

Urban (%)		Rural (%)	
0.1	Fatal collisions	0.9	Fatal collisions
12.9	Injury collisions	14.4	Injury collisions

87.0	Property Damage collisions	84.7	Property Damage collisions
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## WHAT ABOUT DRINKING AND DRIVING?

Of all drivers involved in fatal collisions, 22.7 per cent had consumed alcohol before the crash. Of all drivers involved in injury collisions, 4.6 per cent had consumed alcohol before the crash. The majority of drinking drivers were males. In terms of involvement per 1,000 licensed drivers, males 18-24 years of age were more likely to have consumed alcohol prior to a casualty collision than any other age group. Alcohol-related casualty crashes were most likely to occur in the month of August on the weekends and during the late night/early morning hours.



## WHAT ABOUT SEAT BELTS?

The data shows that occupants who were using restraints at the time of the collision were injured less often (10.3 per cent) than occupants who were not using restraints (38.7 per cent). Occupants using a restraint reduce the likelihood of sustaining an injury and the severity of injury decreases.



Other factors which contributed to the 142,592 reported collisions in 2006 were:

- Driver Condition - 4.4 per cent of total collisions involved one or more drivers identified as having a physical condition which contributed to the collision (i.e. had been drinking, impaired by alcohol/drugs, fatigued/asleep or medical defect). 31.9 per cent of fatal collisions involved one or more drivers with a physical condition which contributed to the collision.
- Speed - 7.8 per cent of total collisions involved one or more drivers indicated by the police as having been travelling at a speed too great for the given conditions. However, 28.2 per cent of fatal collisions involved unsafe speed.
- Vehicle Condition - Only 0.7 per cent of total collisions involved one or more vehicles identified as having a vehicle defect which contributed to the collision.

NOTE: DOES NOT INCLUDE COUNTER REPORTED PROPERTY DAMAGE ONLY COLLISIONS.

Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation  
Office of Traffic Safety

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