



## NEWS RELEASE/COMMUNIQUÉ

### ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

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#### **Detachment Commander's Message on Move Over legislation and the OPP's enforcement**

Noëlville OPP Detachment Commander Staff Tim Foster would like to remind the public about the Move Over Legislation.

This Legislation which came into effect in April 2003, is to increase both officer and public safety.

Ontario's Highway Traffic Act requires motorists when approaching a police, fire or ambulance vehicle stopped with its emergency lights flashing in the same direction of travel, either in a lane or on the shoulder of a road or highway, to slow down and pass with caution.

If the road has two or more lanes, the motorist must move over into another lane, if it can be done safely. If a motorist can't move over, they must slow down to a reasonable speed. Failing to do so can result in the following:

**First offence** - \$400 to \$2,000, plus three demerit points upon conviction and possible suspension of driver's licence for up to two years.

**Subsequent offence** (within five years) - \$1,000 to \$4,000 fine, possible jail time up to six months and possible suspension of driver's licence for up to two years.

#### **IMPACT ON THE OPP:**

Since 1989, five OPP officers have been killed on provincial highways while parked at the side of the road.

At least six OPP officers have been involved in incidents since November 2007 where they were either hit by a vehicle or their cruiser was hit while they were parked on the side of the road, with their lights activated:

- ◆ A cruiser was struck on January 23 in West Region at a collision scene. A tractor trailer lost control, jack-knifed, and skidded over top of Sgt. Scott Braun. He is okay. Officer saw it coming and had the presence of mind to drop to the ground. The tractor trailer passed over him and hit his cruiser.

- ◆ In Cambridge area, on Highway 401 westbound, officer was stopped at collision site and had driver in his cruiser, which was parked in front of damaged car. Another motorist hit the rear of the parked car, pushing it into the OPP cruiser. No one seriously injured but there could have been deaths had the officer and motorist been outside the cruiser.
- ◆ An officer from Nottawasaga Detachment was injured when a vehicle hit him during a traffic stop.
- ◆ An Ottawa OPP officer was injured while investigating crash on Highway 417 at the Riverside Drive off-ramp.
- ◆ In the most recent incident, an SUV sideswiped an officer on Highway 400 northbound on Friday, April 18, 2008. The officer received scrapes and bruises to his arm. The SUV driver failed to stop.
- ◆ A motorist drove into the back end of a fire truck parked on the shoulder of the road at accident scene on Highway 401 in Toronto.

#### **KEY MESSAGES:**

- ◆ Safety of emergency services and other personnel is paramount while they are providing assistance on the shoulder of the province's highways
- ◆ OPP officers put their lives on the line every day when they report for duty but they shouldn't need to worry about being injured – or worse – when making traffic stops on the highways
- ◆ Future deaths and injuries to emergency personnel can be minimized by enacting this legislation
- ◆ Drivers have a responsibility to know the rules of the road as outlined in the *Highway Traffic Act*. Ignorance of the law is no excuse
- ◆ There are signs at border crossings notifying people of the law
- ◆ MTO has included information on the legislation in license renewal notices
- ◆ MTO also posts "move over" reminders on provincial COMPASS signs
- ◆ The OPP has, for the past year, mentioned it regularly in media releases announcing weekend and other traffic initiatives for a number of years
- ◆ In January, 2008 the OPP did a province-wide news release warning drivers that the OPP would be cracking down on offenders
- ◆ There is also financial impact to the OPP and its officers when officers and/or cruisers involved in collisions on the side of the roads – replacing or repairing vehicles, time off duty for injured officers, related health costs, insurance increases, etc.
- ◆ OPP and MTO participated in the production of Toronto Police Service DVD "Move Over Protect Us All". MTO provided funding and helped with distribution of video across the province
- ◆ Similar legislation has already been enacted in Saskatchewan and Alberta, as well as a number of U.S. states
- ◆ The legislation supports and enhances other road safety initiatives including:
  - Highway Incident Management Task Force (Red Tape with the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (OPP) and the Ministry of Transportation);
  - Action Plan for Safer Roads (MTO);
  - Community Safety Zones (MSG)

## **Did You Know?**

### **Ontario Provincial Police Crackdown on Seatbelt Use a Success (From Corporate Communications Bureau in Orillia)**

The Ontario Provincial Police checked more than 1.24 million vehicles during the annual spring seatbelt initiative, which began on April 16 and ended at midnight on April 28. Four people died as a result of not wearing seatbelts during the province-wide campaign.

The OPP, which is responsible for about 70 per cent of the province's highways, laid 10,753 charges against drivers, 4,481 charges against passengers and charged 274 drivers for not having a properly installed child restraint.

Last year, 117 people were killed on roads patrolled by the OPP as a result of not being buckled up a 14.7 per cent increase over 2006. So far in 2008, 27 people not wearing seatbelts have died on OPP-patrolled roads, a 28.9 per cent decrease over the same time last year, when 38 people had been killed as a result of not being buckled up.

"Ontario has one of the highest compliance rates for seatbelt use of any jurisdiction in North America," OPP Commissioner Julian Fantino said. "But there are still drivers out there who don't seem to get it. We had four people die during the campaign because they weren't buckled up. The few seconds it takes to buckle up could be the difference between living and dying if you are involved in a serious collision."

In one incident, OPP stopped a passenger van in which 12 of the 15 people in it weren't wearing seatbelts. The law calls for vehicles to have one seatbelt for each passenger seat.

The OPP was also checking for improperly installed child restraints or young children who weren't in car seats at all. A properly used child seat reduces a child's risk of injury in a motor vehicle collision by as much as 75 per cent, yet as many as 80 per cent of child car seats are used incorrectly.

Municipal police services across the province were also involved in the seatbelt campaign.

