

FROM: Highway Safety Division

DATE: July 28, 2021

PREVENTABLE FATAL COLLISIONS ARE NOT "ACCIDENTS"

(ORILLIA) - With many families travelling on roadways over the Civic Day long weekend, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) reports that **84 per cent** of this year's traffic-related deaths with identified causal factors were preventable and the result of poor or careless driving behaviours and actions.

Very few OPP-investigated road fatalities are the result of an "accident" where no driver is at fault (e.g. collision with wildlife, driver going into medical distress).

As of July 26, 2021, **138** people have died in **131** fatal motor vehicle collisions on OPP-patrolled roads. OPP data reveals that **57 per cent** of the road fatalities involved one or more of the Big 4 leading causal factors in road deaths. These are fatalities related to alcohol/drugs, speed, driver inattention, and lack of seat belt use - all senseless, preventable deaths.

Over the long weekend, OPP officers will be highly visible as they patrol roadways and ensure motorists are not engaging in the same behaviours and actions that have already cost so many drivers and passengers their lives this year.

With the increased police presence, drivers are reminded to comply with Ontario's Move Over law, which **requires drivers to slow down and proceed with caution when passing an emergency vehicle or tow truck parked on the side of the highway with its lights activated. If the highway has more than one lane, drivers must move over and leave one lane between their vehicle and the parked emergency vehicle/tow truck if it can be done safely.**

The OPP has laid more than **450** charges so far this year against drivers who failed to slow down and/or move over for emergency vehicles and tow trucks. The law carries a \$490 to \$2,000 fine plus three demerit points upon conviction. Subsequent offences (within five years) carry a \$1,000 to \$4,000 fine, possible jail time of up to six months and possible suspension of your driver's licence for up to two years.

The OPP is reminding all Ontarians and visitors that the key to an enjoyable long weekend is for everyone to do their part to keep themselves and their loved ones safe on roads, waterways and trails.