



Progress to Reduce Distracted Driving in Canada

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Current project

- > Partial financial support by
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- > Project conducted in partnership with:
 - » Karen Bowman
- > TIRF staff
 - » Sara Oglestone, Jan-Michael Charles



D.I.A.D.
DropItAndDrive.com



Background

- > Increasing interest and activity regarding distracted driving across Canada in past decade.
- > Jurisdictions report that distraction exceeds impaired driving as a factor in crashes.
- > Provincial authorities have responsibility for issue.
- > How to gauge progress nationally?





Scope and methods

- > **A qualitative approach to issue.**
- > **Key objectives of this work include:**
 - » To gain insight into a national picture of distracted driving in Canada.
 - » To identify common practices and experiences across jurisdictions to facilitate broader coordination of activities.
 - » To determine priorities and leverage opportunities based on experiences to date.



Scope and methods

- > **Online survey of cross-section of agencies in December 2014.**
 - » 40 persons from 7 jurisdictions.
- > **Individual phone interviews to augment data in March 2015.**
 - » 7 individuals in 3 jurisdictions.
- > **Synthesis of results to identify recurring themes, differences.**
- > **Create national picture of 'practice' and opportunities for coordination.**





Results

> **Government action**

- » Distracted driving is a top priority.
- » Approach to issue is consistent with other road safety issues.
- » Strategies are legislation/education – few options.
- » Improvements in data collection a key focus – 2 key gaps.
- » 2/3's report measures of effectiveness are not available or not known; coordination, sharing of outcomes is a gap.
- » Disconnect between action and awareness.



Results

> Government

- » Strong partnerships between governments, enforcement and insurance.
- » Media has been very supportive in raising visibility of issue.
- » Smaller jurisdictions appear to more easily coordinate and mobilize; perhaps due to the strong personal relationships or less staff turnover.





Results

> Enforcement

- » Calendar approach is common; arbitrary selection of months.
- » Frequency varies across jurisdictions.
- » Coordination across police agencies is easily achieved and well-established.
- » Enforcement locations are based on experience with some focused on high violation/crash areas – ‘right place at the right time’.
- » 35% report resources are low or inadequate.





Results

> Enforcement

- » 92% focus on drivers; 71% focus specifically on youth.
- » Overt/covert tactics - equally result in violations.
- » Emphasis on talking/texting – best able to detect and enforce in these instances.
- » Texting appears more prominent in urban areas; talking appears in rural areas and on highways.
- » Tickets perceived as ‘cost of doing business’; an ‘inconvenience’; insufficient.



Results

> Education and awareness

- » Most jurisdictions have a program or are using one.
- » The focus of education and awareness has evolved from emphasis on legislation/penalties to risks/consequences.
- » Emphasis on drivers; cyclists, pedestrians are recognized gaps.
- » Campaigns based on strong partnerships with government, enforcement, insurance and media.





Results

> Education and awareness

- » Jurisdictions look at what other types of education/messages are out there.
- » Lots of variation across messages and many jurisdictions choose to develop their own message.
- » Important that message resonates with audience; tailored to jurisdiction and approach to issue.
- » Main tools include posters, PSAs, handouts, outdoor media and social media.
- » Some use of simulators and in-school demonstrations.



Results

- > **Education and awareness (most recognized)**
 - » Leave the Phone Alone
 - » Your Last Words
 - » Make A Promise To Focus On The Road
 - » Distracted driving - What will you miss?
 - » Nomophobia - Are you a nomophobe?
 - » Practice safe TXT



Results

> Legislation

- » Legislation widely implemented across Canada and main focus has been on cell phone use.
- » Fines vary and have increased or are increasing in jurisdictions.
- » 91% use demerits of 2, 3 or 4 points.
- » Effectiveness has been difficult to gauge.





Results

> Longer-term outlook

- » Better data needed to tailor education and target enforcement and this is a priority.
- » Immediacy and nature of penalty believed to be important; long-term effect of demerits is unknown.
- » 2 top strategies to address problem are to increase penalties (58%) and insurance premiums (39%).
- » 31% believe increased education is needed.
- » Automation of enforcement?

Results

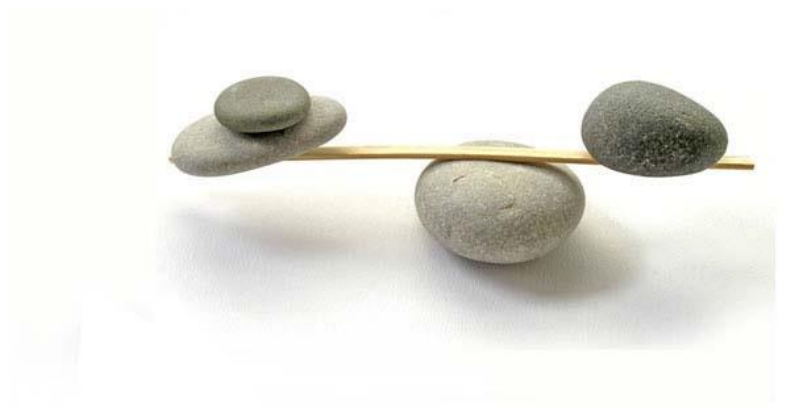
- > **Longer-term outlook**
 - » Need for messages to create social pressure to change behaviour.
 - » Use of mobile aps is emerging but uptake is uncertain.
 - » Varying perspectives whether technology and automation will help or hurt.





Conclusions

- > How to address or overcome the disconnect between attitudes and behaviours?
- > How to translate what agencies are individually doing and learning about this issue into a common, current and accessible knowledge base?
- > What happens if increases in fines and demerits do not have the desired effects?





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