



PRESS RELEASE

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GONE IN A FLASH: NATIONAL SAFE DRIVING WEEK

Freedom. Independence. Mobility.

For young Canadians, driving represents all these things. That is, at least, until a split-second lapse takes them away.

During National Safe Driving Week (Dec. 1–7), the Canada Safety Council (CSC) and the Insurance Brokers Association of Canada (IBAC) are reminding drivers how quickly that freedom can vanish. The campaign highlights the steep cost of distracted driving — from injuries and lost income to soaring insurance premiums and lasting impacts on quality of life.

“One glance away can change everything,” said Peter Braid, CEO of the Insurance Brokers Association of Canada. “Insurance brokers are there to help when life takes an unexpected turn — but prevention starts long before a claim. Staying focused behind the wheel is the simplest way to protect yourself, your loved ones, and everyone sharing the road.”

“In Manitoba, insurance brokers see the real impact that a split-second distraction can have on young drivers and their families,” said Grant Wainikka, CEO of the Insurance Brokers Association of Manitoba. “We’re part of your community, the people you or your parents talk to when the unexpected happens. We’ve seen how quickly plans, goals and freedom are put on hold after a serious crash. One small choice to stay present on the road can make all the difference for your future.”

A Persistent Threat

Distraction remains one of Canada’s deadliest driving behaviours. A 2021 [Transport Canada](#) estimate points to distraction as a contributing factor in more than 1 in 5 fatal collisions (22.5 per cent) and more than a quarter of serious injury collisions (25.5 per cent.)

The [Traffic Injury Research Foundation](#) further identifies that young drivers between 16-19 were most likely to have been distracted, with 20.6 per cent of fatally injured distracted drivers being found in that age bracket. This is tied for the most represented age group along with drivers aged 65 and up.

Distraction is loosely defined as any activity that takes your full focus off the road. It can take on many forms, including mental distraction, eating behind the wheel, adjusting [navigation and infotainment systems](#) and, of course, the ever-present [cell phone use behind the wheel](#). However defined, the consequences are serious and potentially life-altering.

“A moment’s distraction can unravel a lifetime’s freedom,” said Gareth Jones, President and CEO of the Canada Safety Council. “Every glance away from the road is a gamble and the odds are never in your favour, so keep your focus on the road and ensure you arrive to your destination safely.”

“Distraction comes in many forms, but when you are driving, that is the only thing you should be doing,” said Satvir Jatana, President & CEO of Manitoba Public Insurance. “Reduced reaction time is what makes distracted driving so dangerous. Give yourself a chance to react to the unexpected, as those few seconds can make all the difference when it comes to everyone getting home at the end of the day.”

The Cold Truth

Young drivers: it’s easy to feel invincible behind the wheel, or at the very least more prone to taking risks you wouldn’t take outside your car. Here’s what you really risk:

- **Freedom and image.** A serious crash or licence suspension can mean months (or more) without your car. Your freedom is on pause, to say nothing of your social life.
- **Financial cost.** Even a minor collision can lead to costly repairs, fines, and spiking insurance premiums.
- **Physical harm.** Your safety, and that of your passengers, pedestrians, and strangers, is non-negotiable. And unfortunately, bodies break much easier than habits do.

If you think “it won’t happen to me,” that’s not uncommon. Many people to whom collisions happened had the same mentality at the time. Don’t think you’re an exception to actions having consequences.

Every alert, every song change, every text message and Instagram post can wait. Your freedom can’t. Stay present, eyes forward and locked in on the road ahead and on your surroundings. Protect what driving represents — your future, your friends, your life.

Because everything you value can be **gone in a flash**.

ABOUT IBAM:

Founded in 1951, the Insurance Brokers Association of Manitoba (IBAM) represents the interests of property and casualty (P&C) insurance brokers and consumers in Manitoba. There are more than 2,300 P&C insurance brokers and approximately 2,700 people are employed directly at P&C brokerages here in Manitoba. These employees work in over 300 storefronts in more than 120 communities across our great province.

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