
NEWS RELEASE

February 11, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Residents reminded of the dangers of driving while distracted.

PARKLAND COUNTY, AB. Parkland County Patrol Services, along with other Provincial law enforcement agencies and the RCMP, will be concentrating their enforcement efforts on distracted drivers throughout the month of February as part of the 2008 Alberta Strategic Enforcement Plan.

“We’re not out there trying to crack down on drivers,” says Peter Morris, Parkland County Patrol Services Supervisor. “Our focus is on creating awareness and educating drivers on what types of distracting activities put them at a greater risk of becoming involved in a collision.”

According to the Alberta Motor Association and Transport Canada, driver distraction, inattention and improper lookout account for 20 – 50% of all collisions. Regardless of the type of distraction, drivers cannot predict when it is safe to look away from the road. Situations can change abruptly, leaving the driver little to no time to react. Distractions increase the risk for new and young drivers to be involved in a fatal collision.

Although cell phone use has been identified as a serious contributor, distractions come in many forms. “Anything you do in your vehicle that takes away your attention, whether it is eating, drinking, or even changing radio stations, is a distraction,” says Morris. “People have known for years of the dangers of talking on a cell phone while driving. Now we’re faced with another problem, and that is people text messaging while driving.”

Cell phone use while driving is not illegal in Alberta; however, drivers who cause a collision while using a cell phone or are driving unsafely while using the phone can be charged under a number of provincial or federal laws, including dangerous driving, careless driving and criminal negligence causing death or injury.

“Dangers of driving while distracted.”

A survey conducted by Steel Alliance in 2003 reveals that 80% of Alberta drivers feel they are very good to excellent drivers. However, in the same study, Albertans admitted to being the most likely drivers to being engaged in distracting activities:

Multi-Tasking Acts	Committed Most By	Committed Least By
Drink Beverages	Alberta	Quebec
Eating	Alberta	Atlantic
Used cell Phone	Alberta	Quebec
Argued with passengers	Alberta	Quebec
Disciplined children	Atlantic	Quebec
Read	Atlantic	Quebec
Put on make-up, shave	Ontario, B.C.	Manitoba/Saskatchewan
Use high tech device	B.C.	Quebec

Source: Nerves of Steel, 2003 Aggressive Driving Study

Visit the Canadian Automobile website at www.caa.ca/driventodistractio for some helpful tips on how to avoid distractions while driving.

-30-

Parkland County is a rural municipality located immediately west of Edmonton. Covering an area of 246,462 hectares (609,007 acres), it is one of the largest in size and the highest populated of all rural municipalities in Alberta. Parkland County has grown to a community of over 29,000 people and has seen generations of families continue to enjoy country living.

For more information about this release, please contact:

Peter Morris
Patrol Services Supervisor
Parkland County
Phone: (780) 968-8400
Email: pmorris@parklandcounty.com

Jackie Ostashek
Communications Coordinator
Parkland County
Phone: (780) 968-8432
E-mail: jostashek@parklandcounty.com