Injury Issues
Risk is a part of life and, for many people, risk is what makes life worth living. That being said, Parachute advocates the importance of making positive choices and taking smart risks in order to reduce the likelihood of injury, while continuing to participate in the activities you love. Whether you are snowboarding, cycling, or partying, just remember that it’s worth taking a few extra seconds to manage your risk so you can live life with no regrets. For example, if everyone took the two seconds it takes to buckle up a seatbelt, 1,000 lives in Canada would be saved each year.

The following activities are common amongst today’s youth. Each description includes interesting statistics and tips on how to manage the risks for that particular activity. We encourage you to use the statistics and facts provided to help you implement the program in your school and raise awareness in order to put an end to the number one killer of Canada’s youth – injury.
Driving

Getting a driver’s license is an important milestone to every young adult. It brings independence, freedom, and relieves your parents of the responsibility of transporting you around constantly. Unfortunately, newly licensed adolescent drivers have high crash rates. Always remember that driving requires your full attention every time you get behind the wheel. Drugs and alcohol impair your driving and are extremely common risk factors for collisions. Additionally, a growing number of studies show that distractions such as texting, eating, or fidgeting with the radio cause effects that are particularly serious for new drivers. Keep your attention focused on driving and manage your risks while keeping the following statistics and tips in mind.

DID YOU KNOW?

• In Canada, car crashes are the leading cause of death among youth between 15 - 19.

• A recent study found that when drivers take their eyes off the road for more than two seconds their risk of crashing doubles.

• When reading a text message, it take a driver four times longer to hit the brake.

• Statistics from Transport Canada indicate that 45.5% of drivers and 52.2% of passengers aged 15-24 who were fatally injured, were not wearing their seatbelts.

Drive Sober

It’s been a little over a year since police began nabbing drivers talking on their phones while driving — but apparently motorists have not learned their lesson.

Toronto police laid more than 2,500 charges last week during their seven-day campaign to end distracted driving — compared to the 1,500 laid in the 2010 campaign.

This year’s seven-day blitz, dubbed “Last call: Whatever you have to say can wait,” was launched Valentine’s Day and wrapped up Sunday.

122 tickets at $400 each [were] handed out to those who were so distracted by their hand-held devices that their driving was deemed “careless” by officers.

The largest number of tickets — 2,226 at $155 each — was given to drivers using a cellphone. Police said that number is 67 per cent higher than last year.

102 charges were laid for using a hand-held entertainment device, such as an iPod, while 114 charges were laid for driving with a laptop, iPad or another display screen visible to the driver. That’s a respective 21 per cent and 20 per cent increase from 2010.

“The numbers speak for themselves,” said Const. Hugh Smith, adding that people seemed to be on their best behaviour when the law first appeared [but the good behaviour has not lasted].

- Adapted from the Toronto Star, February 23, 2011
• One out of every five people killed in an alcohol-related crash is a passenger.

• Approximately four out of five drinking drivers killed in crashes between 2003-2005 had a blood alcohol level higher than the legal limit. Of those, 30% were also speeding, and more than half were not wearing seatbelts.

• Impairment starts with the first drink, not after you’ve had a few.

**MANAGING THE RISKS:**

**Buckle Up**

• Always wear your seatbelt in both the front and back seats; it is the single most effective way to protect yourself in the event of a crash. Remember: airbags do not take the place of a seatbelt.

• If you are the driver, make sure all passengers are wearing their seatbelts correctly. In case of a collision, passengers not wearing seatbelts become high-speed projectiles and can hurt themselves and/or other occupants in the car.

• A seatbelt is designed to fit one person properly, so make sure you have one seatbelt for every person in your vehicle.

**Look First**

• Walk around your car before driving to check for any damage or obstructions and that your tires are well inflated.

• Ensure that the fluids are topped up, especially in bad weather.

• When driving, look well down the road ahead and avoid all distractions. Check your side and rear view mirrors periodically.

• If you think you might drink, plan ahead by having the phone number of a taxi company with you when you go out.

• Heading out on a road trip? Let someone know your plans and keep in touch with them.
Wear the Gear

• The only gear that will protect you from driving incidents is your brain. Be alert and avoid distractions – your messages can wait.

• Make smart decisions; don’t get into a car with a driver who isn’t fit to drive and don’t drive if you aren’t either. Being fit to drive means being free from the influence of drugs, alcohol, emotion, and distraction.

Get Trained

• Take an approved driver training course. There is no replacement for experience, provided you gain it in a way that manages risk. Driving programs prepare you for the road ahead by teaching good driving habits and decision-making skills.

• Take an advanced driver training course if you feel you need extra practice.

• Learn to say no to people who have been drinking and who want you to drive with them.

• Learn to resist the peer pressure to drive someone home after you’ve been drinking.

Drive Sober

Driving sober means being 100% there when you are behind the wheel. This means you should avoid:

• Driving under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs

• Driving with distracting music or loud friends

• Driving in risky weather conditions

• Driving while talking or texting on your cellphone

• Driving when overtired

• Getting angry with other drivers
Partying

Partying is fun for people of all ages, especially teens and young adults. However, a fun time can be shut down pretty quickly after a fight, a visit from a police officer, drug use, or people getting too drunk. Whether you’re organizing a party or attending one, take the proper precautions so that you won’t regret anything the next morning.

DID YOU KNOW?

• In 2007, a quarter of Ontario students in grades 7-12 engaged in binge drinking (having more than five drinks in a single occasion). Approximately the same number of students reported using cannabis at least once in the past year.

• In Ontario, it is estimated that injuries associated with alcohol cost the province $440 million each year. These injuries result from motor vehicle crashes, falling or acts of interpersonal violence - all involving the consumption of alcohol.

• In nearly 2/3 of the alcohol involved multiple vehicle crashes it was the fatally injured teen driver who had been drinking, not the other driver.

Drive Sober

The mother of a 15-year-old Manitoba girl who froze to death following a friend's 18th birthday party is suing the host parents and their son, alleging they knowingly supplied liquor to minors and failed to ensure the girl got home safely on a frigid winter night.

The teen succumbed to exposure Feb. 14, 2009, about an hour after being dropped off near her Dauphin home.

She had "consumed a significant amount of alcohol" when around 11 p.m. she accepted a ride home from her friend’s father.

The man dropped her off "in the vicinity of her house" around 11:30 p.m. and drove away without ensuring she made it home, the suit claims. She was not wearing a winter coat. She died about an hour later.

The temperature that night was approximately -37C with the wind chill.

- Adapted from the Winnipeg Sun, February 3, 2011
MANAGING THE RISKS:

Look First
• Safety is in numbers: make sure you go to and leave a party with people you know and trust.
• Don’t leave your bags unattended – keep them in eyesight.

Wear the Gear
• Make sure you have enough money for your journey home.
• Have your cellphone with you and know emergency numbers to call in case you need help. If your phone battery is low, take a moment to write down a number you might need later.

Get Trained
• Slow down the absorption of alcohol into your bloodstream by eating before drinking, drinking slowly, having a glass of water as a spacer between drinks, and setting and sticking to a predetermined drink limit.
• If you feel very drunk after a small amount of alcohol, don’t isolate yourself. Get help from a friend or someone in authority and get to a safe place as soon as possible.
• Sobering up can take as many or more hours as the number of drinks you had. There is no way to sober up quickly, so a cold shower and coffee won’t help.

Drive Sober
• Keep to well-lit busy walkways where places are still open. It is best to face traffic as you walk.
• Have your keys ready when getting into your car/house at the end of the night.
• Text among friends to let each other know you’ve gotten home safely.
• Plan ahead! If you are drinking, stay overnight, have a designated driver or take a cab (get the number of a cab company before going out).
• Don’t rely on an unfamiliar person for a ride. Be responsible for your own transportation.
Motorcycles

Whether it’s the appearance, the idea of cost-effective transport, the practicality or simply the ability to avoid traffic congestion, riding a motorcycle has its perks. It gives you an experience much different than driving and it can be an amazing one every time – except if you get injured. Motorcyclists have none of the protection around them that car occupants have. Fortunately, there are measures you can take to reduce the risks of motorcycle crashes and injuries.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The number of motorcyclists killed or seriously injured in intersection crashes is rising. Currently, nearly 40% of motorcycle crash fatalities occur in intersections.
- More than 30% of motorcyclists are killed or seriously injured in crashes occurring during rush hour periods, between 4 p.m. – 8 p.m.
- Nearly half of fatally injured motorcycle riders had been drinking prior to being killed in a crash.

MANAGING THE RISKS:

Buckle Up

- An approved helmet is your best protection against head injury, so make sure your helmet fits and is buckled up properly. Avoid buying a used helmet, as some cracks and fractures do not show on the shell of the helmet but can still significantly reduce the helmet’s ability to protect you.
- Make sure all other gear, such as jackets and boots, are done up securely.

The Canada Safety Council Motorcycle Training Program

This program has been in operation since 1974 and is the only program recognized by the motorcycle industry, federal and provincial governments, and insurers across Canada. Whether you’re an experienced rider or just starting up, you have something to learn. Here are some of the topics covered in the program:

- before you start
- riding tactics for the urban motorcyclist
- traction control
- the open road
- balance and braking
- starting the engine
- slower speed control
- higher speed control
- basic traffic behaviour
Look First
• Check your motorcycle before you ride and make sure it is in good shape.

• Always be aware of your environment. Check for loose gravel, potholes, cracks in the road, steep shoulders, oil slicks, and railroad tracks.

• Motorcycles are vulnerable on the road and especially at intersections, so slow down when you reach one. If you’re a driver, look for motorcyclists when approaching an intersection or changing lanes.

Wear the Gear
• Wear protective outerwear specifically designed for motorcycling. These include non-slip gloves and protective footwear (even on a hot summer day).

Get Trained
• Take a training course such as “Gearing Up” (a motorcycle safety course offered by Canada Safety Council) and learn to ride properly.

• Start with a lower powered bike – trade up when you’ve acquired more experience.

Drive Sober
• Ride sober: never under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or fatigue.

• Ride within your skill level and resist the temptation to speed when on a motorcycle.

All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)

In recent years, ATVs have experienced a dramatic rise in popularity. Because ATVs are specifically designed for off-road driving (rather than for the city streets), they have expanded from strict occupational use to now include recreational riding. With their increased popularity, use, and power, came an increase in the number of deaths and injuries, most of which were preventable. The combination of understanding the risks and following these smart tips are key to an enjoyable and injury-free ATV ride.
DID YOU KNOW?

- Riders under the age of 16 are at an increased risk for severe injury and/or death due to their lack of knowledge, physical size, strength, and cognitive and motor skills needed to operate ATVs safely.
- Almost half of all ATV deaths occur in riders under the age of 16.
- Males are involved in 75-85% of ATV crashes that lead to injury.

MANAGING THE RISKS:

Buckle Up
- Always wear an appropriate helmet and encourage your friends to do the same.
- Make sure gear (chest protector, boots, gloves) is secure before you ride.
- Tie back long hair to ensure it won’t get caught while riding.

Look First
- Check your ATV before you ride, just as you would a car or motorcycle.
- Know the terrain you will be riding on.
- Be aware of the laws that apply for when and where you use your ATV.
- Let friends or family know your route and when you expect to be back.

Wear the Gear
- There are no safety belts or airbags on ATVs. Protect yourself by wearing a helmet and other protective gear, including chest protector, shatterproof glasses, long sleeve shirts, pants and leather boots or shoes.
Get Trained

• Learn all you can about your ATV and the areas you can ride in with minimal risk to yourself and to other riders/pedestrians.

• Never drive an ATV without proper training – take a certified ATV rider’s course.

• In remote areas, it is a good idea to be trained in first aid, in case you are in a situation where immediate medical attention isn’t available.

• Ride within your skill level.

Drive Sober

• Ride sober: never under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or fatigue.

• Leave the headphones at home – riding while listening to music means you aren’t aware of your surroundings.

• Always ride in the company of others, but do not allow anyone to ride along on your ATV, since most ATVs are designed for one person.

Rail Safety

There are approximately 55,000 public, private, and pedestrian highway/railway crossings in Canada. Unfortunately, the number of fatalities and serious injuries due to pedestrian and vehicle crashes with trains are extremely high and usually these incidents are preventable. It is important to realize that in the case of a collision, you stand no chance against a train, regardless of whether you are walking or driving.

DID YOU KNOW?

• More than 70% of all crossing crashes can be attributed to a motor vehicle’s failure to stop.

• A motorist is 40 times more likely to die in a crash involving a train than in a collision involving another motor vehicle.

• It takes only 20 seconds for a train to reach a crossing from the moment the warning lights begin to flash.
MANAGING THE RISKS:

Look First

• Always be on the lookout for a train when approaching a railway crossing. When you are around tracks, make sure to remove headphones and pay attention to your surroundings.

• When waiting for a train to pass at a railway crossing with more than a single pair of tracks, watch for a second train approaching in the other direction.

• Trains are usually traveling at a speed much faster than it appears, so never assume you have enough time to cross the railway tracks before a train comes.

The deaths of three teenagers killed by a train in Montreal on Sunday highlights the danger of trespassing on and around train tracks, rail officials say.

"This is a tragic, tragic [incident] and a sad reminder nobody should ever trespass on railroad property," said a railway spokeswoman.

She also said people often misjudge how risky it is to wander on tracks. "It's extremely dangerous, people think they will hear the train and have an idea of its speed, but they don't hear it despite the noise, and it's hard to judge the speed."

Police say five youths, between 17- and 19-years-old, were wandering along railroad tracks in east-end Montreal around 3 a.m. Sunday when three were hit by the train.

Two teenagers died at the scene while third was brought to a nearby hospital and died soon after from his injuries. The two other teens were treated for shock.

Police think the youths may have been wandering on the rail tracks near the highway to do graffiti. The concrete pillars in the area make it a popular spot for local graffiti artists.

Transport Canada statistics indicate about 79 people per year are killed or seriously injured [as a result of] trespassing, and along with crossing [incidents], are the main cause of railway fatalities and serious injuries.

- Adapted from the Toronto Sun, October 31, 2010
Get Trained

- Learn what all the railway crossing warning signals mean and always obey them. For example: if the warning signals are flashing, it means a train is quickly approaching and it is unsafe to cross the tracks.

Drive Sober

- Only cross tracks at designated pedestrian or motorist railway crossings.
- Do not take a shortcut or rush to pass through a railway crossing by walking, driving, or biking before an approaching train passes. Impatience can put you at serious risk for collision and death, so take a longer but safer route to your destination. Don't let a shortcut cut your life short!
- Proceed through a crossing only if the warning signals indicate it is safe to do so and you are certain you can completely pass without stopping (keep in mind that the train is nearly a metre wider than the tracks on both sides).

Cycling and Mountain Biking

There are over one billion bicycles worldwide and this popular vehicle is used by people for a variety of reasons – transportation, recreation, and even exercise. In Canada, cycling as a means of transportation comes in fourth after cars, public transport, and walking. Recently, it has also become a popular form of recreation, with nearly 40 million people taking part in sports such as mountain biking each year. While it is important to get into the habit of smart riding early on in your riding experience, it is never too late to apply a few safety tips for the next time you go biking.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Riding during the afternoon traffic rush (4 - 6 p.m.) is particularly risky for cyclists: 17% of cyclists who were killed and 23% of those who were seriously injured were struck at this time.
- Incidents at intersections account for nearly 40% of cyclists who were killed and over 60% of those who suffered serious injuries.

- A human skull is only one centimetre thick. A properly fitted and correctly worn bike helmet can cut the risk of serious head injury by up to 85%. This means that if every cyclist wore a helmet, as many as four out of five brain injuries linked to cycling could be prevented.

MANAGING THE RISKS:

Buckle Up

- Always wear a safety-approved helmet that fits correctly and replace it every five years or when it is damaged in a crash. Do not wear a high ponytail or a hat while wearing a helmet.

- Tie your laces and check for any loose clothes or backpack straps that could potentially get caught in your bike.

A July 13 letter argued the law requiring the use of helmets while riding a bike should be repealed, calling it "intolerant and senseless."

While it is true that the vast majority of cyclists ride safely and without incident, helmets protect riders not just from their own unsafe actions, but from the myriad safety hazards that assail every rider, every day.

Cycling with a conscious effort towards safety is imperative, but it will not protect the rider when a vehicle's side mirror clips them in traffic or a dog collides with their front wheel and launches them off their bikes.

And one cannot discount the staggering costs involved in the treatment and rehabilitation of cyclists who sustain head trauma as a result of a biking accident.

Just one accident to one rider can result in hundreds of thousands of dollars in medical bills, borne by the public, and great emotional stress to the rider and his or her family.

Cuts and scrapes will heal, broken bones will mend, but head trauma can be devastating and permanent, when not fatal.

So to the officers who issue tickets for cycling without a helmet, I say thank you.
Look First

• Make sure the bike is the right size for you.

• Pay close attention at both intersection and non-intersection locations, especially in urban areas, and make eye contact with drivers to be sure they see you.

• Ride with (never against) the flow of traffic, nearest to the right as possible and in a single file if riding with others. When preparing to turn, use hand signals to make others around you aware of your next move.

• If you are planning to ride on mountainous trails, take time to look at the terrain and for anything on the trail that might obstruct your path.

Wear the Gear

• Most Canadian provinces have bike helmet laws. Whether yours does or not, remember to protect your brain every time you ride.

• Always be seen! Reflectors on the wheels and pedals are an easy and affordable way to stand out. When riding at night, make sure you have a headlight, taillight and a red reflector on the rear of your bike. Wearing light coloured/reflective clothing will make you stand out even more.

• Have a bell or horn to warn others you are going to pass them.

Get Trained

• Take a course or get the help of a trainer when trying new cycling sports such as mountain biking.

• If you are just starting off as a mountain biker, it is best to stick to beginner trails. Stick to a trail which you know you can do and resist the temptation to show off for your friends.

Drive Sober

• Make sure you’re fit to ride your bike – if you plan to ride, stay away from substances that will tamper with your balance and decrease your ability to react quickly, such as alcohol and drugs.
• Cyclists must follow the same rules as motorists – always obey the rules of the road. However, even if you have the right of way, never assume that motorists will yield to you. In case of a crash, they will win!

• Cyclists need to be aware of who and what is around them at all times: avoid wearing headphones and /or using a cellphone while riding your bike.

Skateboarding

The sport of skateboarding began in the 1950s, as a result of surfers from California who wanted to recreate the surfing experience on the streets. Since then, skateboarding has become a popular activity with millions of young participants around the world and like many sports, skateboarding has its risks. A large number of teens suffer from ankle strains, wrist fractures and head injuries when the necessary safety precautions are not taken.

DID YOU KNOW?

• The majority of skateboarding injuries are due to falls caused by irregular riding surfaces, with broken arms being the most common.

• A properly fitted and correctly worn skateboarding helmet can cut the risk of serious head injury by up to 85%. This means that if every skateboarder wore a helmet, four out of five brain injuries related to skateboarding could be prevented.

TONY HAWK’S TOP 5 SAFETY TIPS

Tip #1: No piece of gear is more important than a properly fitted helmet. A helmet is essential to your safety.

Tip #2: Make sure that your bike is the right size so that you have maximum control when you ride.

Tip #3: Keep your bike tuned up. Your tires should be properly inflated, and you should always make sure that your brakes, spokes, chain and other moving parts are in good shape and properly lubricated.

Tip #4: Always wear a helmet, elbow and knee pads on scooters and skateboards. You’ll never see Tony Hawk without this essential safety equipment.

Tip #5: Follow the rules of road by always riding on the right-hand side of the street and obeying traffic laws.

- Adapted from Boys Life Magazine.
MANAGING THE RISKS:

Buckle Up
• Get a helmet and use it properly...recognize you have a lot to lose and don’t be afraid to set a trend! You need a helmet specifically designed for skateboarding. It covers more of the back of the head and will protect against more than one crash. Ensure that the strap is tight enough that the helmet will not slide off if you fall from the skateboard.

Look First
• Give your board a safety check each time before you ride.
• Ensure your wheels are tightened and inspect grip-tape for any worn out spots.
• Examine ramps and terrain to ensure they are structurally sound and that you know what to expect when taking off and landing.

Wear the Gear
• Wear protective equipment including a helmet, closed and slip-resistant shoes, wrist, knee, and elbow padding.
• Padded jackets and shorts may also help reduce the number and severity of cuts and scrapes.

Get Trained
• Learning how to fall properly may help reduce the risk of serious injury. For example, if you are losing your balance, crouch down on the skateboard so you will not have as far to fall.
• Know your Stupid Line! Complicated tricks require much patience and practice and should only be attempted in specially designed areas.

Drive Sober
• Refuse alcohol and/or drugs before or while skateboarding.
• Obey the city laws where you are skating, and avoid busy streets.
• Always watch for other pedestrians, objects, and hazards on the road.
Swimming

A jump into the lake to cool off on a hot summer day seems like the perfect idea. However, the ideal day can quickly change when the risks of water activities are not addressed. Whether you’re just floating in the water or going in for a dive, it is important to keep in mind that the water has its hazards and the best way to avoid these risks is by evaluating them in a smart way.

DID YOU KNOW?

• More than 500 people drown in Canada each year, all of which are preventable.
• More than half of all drowning incidents and submersion among teens aged 15-19 occur in natural waters.
• Teens are more likely than any other age group to suffer diving injuries, many of which result in spinal cord damage or death.

MANAGING THE RISKS:

Buckle Up

• Wear a lifejacket if you are learning to swim and make sure to put it on before entering the water.
• Lifejackets reduce heat loss when in cold water; they keep you afloat and double your survival time in case of hypothermia.

Look First

• Do not assume it safe to dive or jump simply because the water “looks deep enough”. Always check the depth of the water on the day you dive, as water levels change over time.

- Adapted from CBC News, July 17, 2011
• Never dive into an above-ground pool.

• If swimming at the beach, ensure lifeguards are present and that the flags indicate the water conditions are safe for swimming.

**Wear the Gear**

• Applying sunscreen will protect you from harmful UVA and UVB rays that can lead to sunburn and skin cancer. Make sure to re-apply the sunscreen after spending time in the water.

• Although flotation devices come in handy, never rely on them in place of actual swimming ability. It is always a possibility that they may fall off or you may lose them.

**Get Trained**

• It is easy to misjudge swimming ability, so be aware of the dangers associated with different water conditions. Cold water and currents can overpower the skills of even an excellent swimmer or athlete.

• Always remember that swimming in open water is not like swimming in a pool.

**Drive Sober**

• Never use alcohol or drugs around water. Alcohol affects your judgement and swimming skills.

• Hunger, dehydration, and exhaustion significantly increase the effects of hypothermia, so have plenty of food, water, and rest before getting close to cold water.

**Boating and Watersports**

Whether for transport or recreation, there are countless ways to enjoy bodies of water – from waterskiing to tubing behind a motor boat, to exercising or relaxing in a canoe, kayak, or sailboat. Unfortunately, these activities can also lead to life-threatening incidents, ones that could have been avoided by taking simple preventive measures.
DID YOU KNOW?

• According to the Canadian Coast Guard, 65% of the 60,000 incidents they attend to annually involve recreational boaters.

• Every year in Canada, close to 90% of those who die by drowning while boating are not wearing a lifejacket or a PFD (personal flotation device).

• Nearly 65% of deaths associated with boating activities involve the use of alcohol.

MANAGING YOUR RISKS:

Buckle Up

• Make sure your approved and properly fitted lifejacket or PFD is buckled up at all times on the boat. Simply having it in the boat ‘close by’ is not enough. You can compare trying to put on a lifejacket or a PFD in an emergency to trying to put on your seatbelt in the middle of a car crash.

Look First

• Check the weather and water conditions before getting into your speed boat, canoe, or kayak.

• Look over your vessel to ensure there are no cracks, all equipment is on board, and that it is all in good condition.

• File a travel plan with family or officials if going out on a long trip.

• Be able to recognize when water levels and current speeds exceed your ability, and refrain from getting into the water in such conditions.
Wear the Gear

• You should not be barefoot in a canoe. Always wear shoes (running shoes are best).

• Dress for the water temperature and be prepared to get wet, especially when canoeing or kayaking. Avoid cotton, because once wet, it becomes heavy and takes a long time to dry. Synthetic materials like fleece and polyester are best.

• Familiarize yourself with Transport Canada’s mandatory list of gear required for vessels of various sizes. This will prepare you in case of emergency and for random checks by Harbour Police or the Coast Guard.

Get Trained

• You are not alone in the water, just as you are not alone on the road. There are rules you have to obey, so learn and understand the federal and provincial rules and regulations to avoid unnecessary confusion and risks.

• Begin kayaking with experienced paddlers to help build your strength in the sport.

• Take a boating course – it will teach you the safety rules of boat operation and will prepare you for different situations you might find yourself in. Transport Canada requires all operators of vessels with motors to have proof of competency on board.

Drive Sober

• The effects of alcohol are magnified while on the water due to sunlight, heat, and water motion. Therefore, even a tiny amount of alcohol can leave you impaired. Avoid this by staying sober.

• Drinking and boating is just as illegal as drinking and driving.

• As the boat operator, you are responsible for your passengers and others on the water, so always drive at safe speeds.
Snowmobiling

Since the 1950s, snowmobiles have been increasingly used for recreation. With this increase in popularity also comes an increase in serious injuries and deaths associated with snowmobile use. Riding a snowmobile provides you with an amazing opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and go places that other vehicles cannot. The best experience though, is enjoying the ride injury free.

DID YOU KNOW?

• The most common injuries to those riding snowmobiles are broken arms and legs in addition to head injuries.

• People between the ages of 15-25 are at higher risk for injury than any other age group. Other high risk groups include males and residents of smaller communities.

Look First

Before you take your snowmobile out on the ice, it is important to know if the ice is safe. For this reason, the Canada Safety Council provides some guidelines on the use of snowmobiles on ice covers. The colour of ice is often your first indication of the quality of the ice: clear blue is the strongest, white is half as strong as blue, and grey ice is unsafe. While colour is a helpful indicator of ice quality, it should not be the only one you use.

Minimum ice thickness for new clear hard ice:

3” (7cm) or less STAY OFF

4” (10cm) ice fishing, walking, cross country skiing

5” (12cm) one snowmobile or ATV

8”-12” (20-30cm) one car or small pickup truck

12”-15” (30-38cm) one medium truck (pickup or van)

Look for ice that is checked by designated authorities on a regular basis. You can, however,
MANAGING THE RISKS:

Buckle Up

• Always wear a properly fitted helmet and fasten your clothing.

Look First

• Familiarize yourself with the path you will be travelling on and check the weather conditions before riding: avoid travelling in unsafe, high-risk areas (e.g., lakes and roadways) or when your visibility/control over the snowmobile is impaired (e.g., driving at night and in snowy conditions).

• Be on the constant lookout for obstacles hidden in the snow, pedestrians/other sleds, guidewires, wildlife, road and railway crossings, bridges, open water, and unsafe ice.

• When approaching a railway crossing, keep in mind that snowmobiles are generally wider than train rails, and that riding next to the tracks might put you in danger, so stay off and away from train tracks.

Wear the Gear

• Dress properly! Layers prevent hypothermia and today’s high tech winter wear ensures ease and comfort while riding. Don’t forget warm boots and gloves. It is also a good idea to bring extra clothing along.

• Make sure you carry extra fuel when going on long rides.

Get Trained

• Take a snowmobile course and ensure you have the appropriate insurance, licensing and trail permits for the areas you are riding in.

• Let someone (who is not snowmobiling with you) know where you are going and when you expect to be back, and never ride alone.

Drive Sober

• Whether driving a snowmobile or a car, driving while impaired is illegal. Alcohol also increases your susceptibility to cold and hypothermia.
Always travel at a safe speed that will give you enough time to react in case you need to slow down or quickly change your direction.

Skiing, Snowboarding, and Avalanche Awareness

Skiing and snowboarding are two of the most competitive and popular winter sports enjoyed by millions of people worldwide. However, there are many aspects of these sports that can put even the most experienced athlete in danger. Avalanches and obstacles such as trees, rocks, and other skiers/snowboarders are just a few potential risks to manage on the slopes.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Skiers and snowboarders wearing a helmet are 35% less likely to suffer from a head injury than those without a helmet.
- Individuals 10-19 years of age have the highest rates of emergency department visits for skiing and snowboarding related injuries.
- Skiers and snowboarders trigger the majority of fatal avalanches in the alpine.
- After 35 minutes, a buried victim has only a 27% chance of survival.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SKI GOGGLES

Wearing goggles is extremely necessary if you are going out for skiing or snowboarding as these equipments provide great protection to your eyes out there on the snow fields. If you do not wear goggles while skiing or snowboarding, you will be exposed to several risks to your eyes including ice particles, debris, twist and snow flying towards your face while sloping down the hill at high speeds. These goggles also protect your eyes from harmful UV sun rays that become stronger when reflected back from the snow. [...] 

[Ski goggles] should provide a better peripheral vision, they must be comfortable to be worn and should fit properly over the contours of your face. The inside and the straps of the goggles should have pads so that you do not get injured if you fall badly. If your goggles have a good peripheral vision, then you will be able to see everything clearly on your way down the slope including rocks, trees, other people and uneven terrain. [...] 

It is important to give a lot of consideration while purchasing your ski or snowboarding goggles. In this way, you will be able to enjoy these sports at their best and at safest.

- Adapted from TipTravel.info.
MANAGING THE RISKS:

Buckle Up
• Always make sure your helmet, boots, and clothing are fastened correctly and fit properly.
• Bindings should only be adjusted by a professional.

Look First
• Recognize the signs of a potential avalanche.
• When going downhill, skiers and snowboarders below you have the right of way. While you might be able to see them, they may not see you.
• Before going down a hill, merging or crossing a trail, look both ways and uphill.
• Pay attention to the marked trails and their difficulty level.

Wear the Gear
• When purchasing skis or a snowboard, be sure to select the right length and style for your height and ski level.
• Dress warmly and in layers. Choose fabric that will reduce sliding after a fall and is waterproof. Brighter colours are best because they can be seen from a distance.
• When skiing in backcountry and areas that are not professionally groomed, carry and know how to use emergency avalanche equipment in your backpack including:
  • A shovel
  • Emergency beacons
  • Probes (aluminum poles that will allow you to penetrate dense, compact avalanche debris)

Get Trained
• If you are a beginner, get trained by a certified instructor before hitting the slopes. Advanced skiers can also benefit from a refresher or advanced course.
• Take a course offered by an avalanche professional and make sure you know how to use your beacons, probes, and shovels in an emergency.

• When ascending a hill, choose the safest route possible by sticking close to low angle ridges and dense trees.

• If you get caught in an avalanche:
  • Move away from your machine and equipment.
  • Try to grab on to something solid (tree, rock, etc.)
  • If you are being swept with the avalanche, “swim” with it (never against) and away from its centre.
  • Before coming to a stop, push yourself towards the surface and place your hands over your face to create an air pocket.
  • Once the avalanche is over, you may be able to dig yourself out. Stay calm and shout only when a searcher is near.

**Drive Sober**

• Always ski or snowboard with someone else.

• Skiing and snowboarding under the influence of alcohol or drugs will increase your chances of injuring yourself and others and you are less likely to survive an avalanche.

• Follow all posted signs and rules.

• Do not wear headphones while skiing or snowboarding: losing track of the outside world means losing track of other skiers and snowboarders, warning shouts, and other obstacles.

• The highest risk of injury is on the first and last runs of the day so be extra cautious at these times.
Hockey

On May 12, 1994, the Parliament of Canada declared ice hockey the country’s national winter sport. Starting long before then, and to this day, hockey has held a prominent position in Canadian culture, with hundreds of thousands of recreational and professional players. Still, hockey is a sport high in injuries, many of which are preventable, so take the proper safety precautions during your next game!

DID YOU KNOW?

• During a National Hockey League game, the puck can travel at speeds up to 160 km/h, making it the fastest moving object in a professional team sport.

• In 2008, there were 190 severe injuries in hockey in Ontario and 82% of these incidents involved players under 30.

• 80% of hospitalizations for hockey-related injuries in Canada are due to body contact with other players or objects besides sports equipment.

Get Trained

It was a scene that seemed all too familiar: on Sunday, October 3rd, Andrew Zaccardo of the Laval Patriots Midget AA hockey team was hit from behind by an opposing team member at the Martin Brodeur arena.

Just under a year ago, Zaccardo was playing on a Lac St. Louis Tigers midget espoirs team and one of his teammates, Marc-Andre Emond, suffered a similar injury when a hit from behind sent him crashing into the boards.

Zaccardo suffered a broken rib and a fracture of the C-5 and C-6 vertebrae after he was hit from behind. He underwent surgery on October 4th and, while the operation was deemed a success, Zaccardo still can't move his lower limbs.

The Montreal Children’s Hospital Trauma program, along with many other hockey experts and well-respected officials warn that in order to prevent such devastating injuries, players must never hit anyone from behind. The well-being and safety of all amateur hockey players is of primary importance. This includes, among other things, a shared responsibility with parents and guardians to nurture the physical and emotional well-being and safety of its participants.
MANAGING THE RISKS:

Buckle up:
• Make sure your helmet fits properly and the strap is fastened. Replace your helmet at least every five years, or if it is cracked or was involved in a major collision.

Look First:
• If you choose to play with your friends on a frozen pond, make sure the ice is thick enough to support the weight of your group. Keep in mind that a consistent thickness of 15 centimetres is recommended for safety and it is up to you to assess the thickness of the ice (the best way to do this is with a drill).

Wear the Gear:
• Wear the undergarments that will keep you cool and comfortable when you sweat under your equipment. Wear a single pair of socks in your skates and avoid wrinkles in them when tightening your skates.
• Wear the proper protective gear, including: helmet, face shields or full-face protectors, gloves, shoulder pads, elbow pads, shin pads, mouthguards and athletic support.

Get Trained
• Work on your fitness: if you are physically fit, you are less likely to be injured.
• Always warm up to prepare your body for physical activity, and cool down after the exercise to allow your body to recover. Both will allow you to increase your level of performance and decrease your risk of injury.
• Know how to skate well before playing. Be comfortable with stopping, turning, and getting up after a fall.
• Know the rules of hockey, follow them throughout the game and learn the fundamental techniques of the game from coaches and leaders.
• Think twice before you fight with another player – in addition to putting yourself at risk for serious injury, in any youth league there will be a harsh penalty, which will not only affect you but also your entire team.
Drive Sober

- Never play under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Never hit another player in the head or from behind.
- Use your arms, hands, shoulders, or facemask to cushion an impact of contact with an object or another player to avoid spinal cord injury.

Equestrian and Rodeo

Horseback riding is a very popular activity across Canada and throughout the world, but is not one that comes without risks. Rodeo is a related sport that is extremely popular, particularly in western Canadian cities such as Calgary. These sports have a great deal to offer both participants and spectators when injury prevention and risk management are taken seriously.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Serious head and spinal cord injuries are the most common types of injuries experienced by equestrian riders.
- Rodeo is a sport with a high risk of injury, especially in rough stock events (which include bareback, saddle bronc, and bull riding). Many sport commentators consider bull riding “the most dangerous eight seconds in sports”.

MANAGING THE RISKS:

Buckle Up

- It is strongly recommended that you wear a helmet, even if it is not required for your event (many professionals wear one regardless).
- Ensure that your horse’s gear, such as girth, bridle, and stirrup leathers, are done up correctly.

Look First

- Check all your equipment before riding and make sure it is in good condition.
Get someone to make sure you are sitting on the animal correctly, that your tack is on correctly, and that you have an idea of what to expect.

If heading out on a hack or trail ride, let someone who is staying behind know your timeline and route.

**Wear the Gear**

- Always wear appropriate protective equipment while riding (e.g., gloves, mouthguard, Kevlar vest, etc.).

**Get Trained**

- Take a few minutes to do some warm-up stretches before riding. You can learn a few useful ones by asking an experienced rider to show you some – a few minutes of warm-up can save you a lot of pain later!

- If you are new to horseback riding or rodeo, take lessons from an experienced rider.

- Know and follow the rules for riding (e.g., Central Alberta Rodeo Association General Rules) and the rules for the specific event(s) you will be participating in.

- If entering a show or competition, make sure you are entered in a level that aligns with your riding abilities.

**Drive Sober**

- If you’ve fallen off a horse and suspect a concussion, avoid riding until you’ve been checked out by a medical professional.

- Riding under the influence of alcohol or drugs will affect your ability to ride a horse just as it would your ability to drive a boat or ride a bike.

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An 18-year-old bull rider from Okanagan died after being trampled during a rodeo on Friday night.

The teenager was bucked off his bull and stomped on at the annual Canoe Mountain Rodeo shortly before 8 p.m. Roughly 200 rodeo spectators were watching when the horrific incident took place.

He managed to stand up momentarily before collapsing. He was rushed to a local medical facility, but died of his injuries shortly after.

- Adapted from CTV News, July 10, 2010
Farming

Farming is a universal and longstanding practice that plays an important role in the Canadian economy. Many teens and young adults are involved in agriculture throughout the country and so it is important to recognize that with its machinery and demanding work, farming can be very dangerous.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Over 90% of agricultural fatalities occurred in males and over 70% were caused by machinery.
- The most common cause of agricultural death in individuals aged 15-59 is rollover of farming vehicles, with entanglement in machinery being the second.

MANAGING THE RISKS:

Buckle Up
- Wear a seatbelt at all times when on a tractor or any other farm vehicle.

Look First
- Check the weather and ground conditions before going out on the field: thick mud, ice, and steep slopes may worsen the performance of the tractor/other farm vehicle, which could lead to a backwards rollover.
- Make sure power tools are properly grounded or have a double insulated cord, and never use them in a wet area.
- Before entering any livestock enclosure, ensure you can leave the facility easily and quickly if needed.
Wear the Gear
• Brakes and electrical systems on tractors, farm trucks, and other farm vehicles should be properly maintained and routinely tested.

• Equip the tractor with a Roll Over Protection Structure (ROPS) – it is more comfortable, gives overhead protection, and helps prevent falls from tractors.

• Wear clothing without strings or loose ends that could catch on any equipment/machinery you will be using. Jewelry should not be worn and long hair should be tied back.

• Wear appropriate protective equipment (job dependent) such as glasses, goggles, dust masks, face shields, hearing protection, etc.

• Keep hydrated and wear sunscreen of at least SPF 15 with UVA and UVB protection.

Get Trained
• Read the operator’s manual and warnings for all machinery you will be using to understand how to operate them properly and safely.

• Do not park tractors and other farm equipment on slopes. If parking on a slope is necessary, do not work in the potential path of the machine.

• Make sure you understand some of the common instincts of animals, since they can be unpredictable (e.g., changes in lighting or shadows can excite or spook them, and sudden loud noises can frighten them).

Drive Sober
• Most farm machines are not designed to seat extra passengers. In case of a rollover, death or serious injury is very likely.

• Reduce speed when turning corners and when driving on rough, hilly, or uneven ground. Avoid operating machines on steep slopes and ditches.

• Drivers should remain seated at all times. Never stand or jump out of a moving vehicle.
Stunts

We’ve all seen breathtaking or daring stunts in TV and film, and we may even know of someone with an unusual or physically demanding talent that they showcase from time to time. What we need to keep in mind, however, is that often stunt performers have undergone hours of rigorous training and practice, have special equipment, and often have back up support in case something goes wrong.

DID YOU KNOW?

• Pioneering car stunt performer Rémy Julienne, who since 1965 has been involved in over 1,400 TV, film, and commercial stunts, opened a school especially to provide drivers and mechanics the special skills for stunt work.

• A study of newspaper coverage on car surfing from 1990 to 2008 revealed that males accounted for 70% of all car surfing injuries, and 69% of all car surfing injuries occurred in youth aged 15 to 19.

• Proper training can lead to a career in stunt operations – for example, Natural Resources Canada offers certification and licensing for pyrotechnicians through their Explosives Regulatory Division.

MANAGING THE RISKS:

Buckle up

• If you’ve been practising a stunt and it requires a helmet, life-jacket, harness, or any other piece of gear with a buckle – make sure it fits snugly and that the buckle is always done up.

Look First

• Check your environment for obstacles that may affect your ability to pull off your stunt.

• Consider the weather conditions – will they negatively affect what you’re trying to pull off?
• Will your stunt come in the way of anyone else? If so, consider blocking off an area or letting people know in advance.

Wear the Gear
• It is important to realize that while professional stunts in movies may not always portray gear, there is a fully equipped team nearby ready to rescue the performer in case any difficulties are encountered.

• Make sure that you are wearing gear recommended by an expert in the field or a governing body – don’t take a movie star’s equipment choices as correct.

Get Trained
• Before trying something new, talk to an expert or professional to ensure your execution and landing is correct. Their expertise will help you with points you may not have even considered.

• If you have a passion for difficult or impressive physical feats, learn how to execute them in a safe, controlled environment – whether it’s skydiving, motorcycle stunts, or Cirque du Soleil style acrobatics – look up a course near you.

One day before his 25th birthday, Adam* made the fatal decision to "car surf" on his Pontiac Sunfire while his friend took the wheel.

"This is an incredibly dangerous stunt that involves standing on the roof of a moving vehicle without any safety equipment or attachment to the vehicle," explained Const. Steve Holmes, Monday.

Shortly after 1 a.m., June 11, the 26-year-old driver lost control, and the car rolled down an embankment 10 kilometres up Bear Creek Main Road, throwing Adam from the roof.

Adam, who had made a name for himself during his years at UBC Okanagan for doing everything from organizing Remembrance Day ceremonies to working on homelessness initiatives, died at the scene as a result of his injuries.

There was no evidence suggesting the use or influence or drugs or alcohol, but his long-time friend [...] was arrested at the scene.

Police are recommending charges of dangerous operation of a motor vehicle and criminal negligence causing death, said Holmes.

He noted the friend was released from custody on a promise to appear for a court date in December.

"He faces imprisonment," noted Holmes, adding that although Adam may have chosen to get on the roof of the car himself, it's his friend's decision to drive that are cause for police to recommend criminal charges.

–Adapted from Kelowna Capital News, June 15, 2011

*Name changed to protect identity.
**Drive Sober**

- Most stunts require immense preparation and concentration – keep distractions away and stay focused throughout the whole process.
- If you’re tired or feeling emotional, the risk of complications in any activity increases. Make sure you’re well rested and up for the task at hand before you engage in it.
- Resist crossing your Stupid Line as a result of peer pressure – if you’re not up for something, tell your friends.

**Work**

Having a job can be a great learning experience as long as you manage your injury risks and your time to find a healthy balance between the job, your school work, and spending time with friends and family. It is also important that you know your rights in the workplace and exercise safety in all job tasks. While your job may be important to you, it is never worth it if you are put in potentially dangerous situations and are unprepared.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- Young workers are more likely than adults to be injured on the job, although they work only 10% of the hours of all workers.
- Each year in Canada, more than 48,000 young workers are injured seriously enough to require time off from work.
- 80% of work related injuries among teens in Canada occurred when no supervisor was present.

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**Look First**

You have rights when it comes to unsafe work!

**Right to participate** as a worker representative in decisions affecting workplace health and safety.

**Right to know** about workplace hazards.

**Right to refuse** work that you believe to be unsafe.

- Adapted from workerrights.ca
MANAGING THE RISKS:

Buckle Up
• Be sure to wear the proper personal protective equipment for the task, whether that is a helmet or hard hat, work boots, goggles, etc.

Look First
• Safety should always be the first thing on your mind – workplace incidents can happen at any job and can cause serious injuries.

Wear the Gear
• Be sure that you know when to wear the protective equipment, where to find it, how to use it, and how to care for it.

Get Trained
• Ask your supervisor to slow down and repeat the instruction if you are given too much information too quickly. Do not perform any tasks until you have been properly trained and feel confident about performing the task. Ask for help if you are unsure about anything!
• Understand what to do in an emergency situation such as a fire, earthquake, power failure, etc.
• You have a responsibility to report any hazards to your employer, so do not be shy to speak up!
• You have the right to refuse work that you reasonably believe can be dangerous to yourself or others – no job or amount of money is worth an injury.
• Get certified through Passport to Safety (passporttosafety.com).

Drive Sober
• Unless it is unsafe to do so, stay at your work area until you’ve been told to leave. You might not be aware of certain hazards in other areas of the work site (e.g., overhanging power lines, slippery floors, toxic chemicals, etc.)
• Even if you find your work boring, working under the influence of alcohol, drugs or distractions like headphones will expose you and your colleagues to serious risk, so be sure to stay focused on the tasks at hand.