

RENFREW COUNTY

Joint Transportation Consortium



Welcome to the fall edition of the RCJTC's "Bus Stop News". This newsletter is a publication that will be distributed to all stakeholders to keep them informed of all ongoing or upcoming operational items, and to provide them with school bus related information specific to the season. In this newsletter, we will provide information about our recent operations, discuss wildlife collisions and how to prevent them, safety measures specific to the season, important dates, and provide reminders for the coming months.

Wildlife Collision Facts

From 2013 to 2018, over **14,000** collisions between cars and wildlife were reported just in Ontario each year.

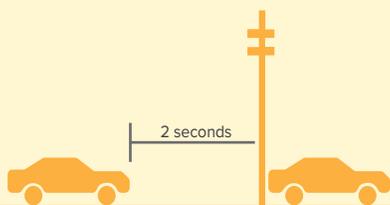
Out of these reported collisions, **2613** had injuries and **20** people were killed in that time period.

On average, there are **4 to 8** vehicle collisions with large animals every hour in Canada. In Ontario, **1 out of every 17** vehicle collisions involves a wild animal.

Motorcycle riders are at a higher risk. In 2014, **85%** of deer-motorcycle accidents ended with motorist deaths.

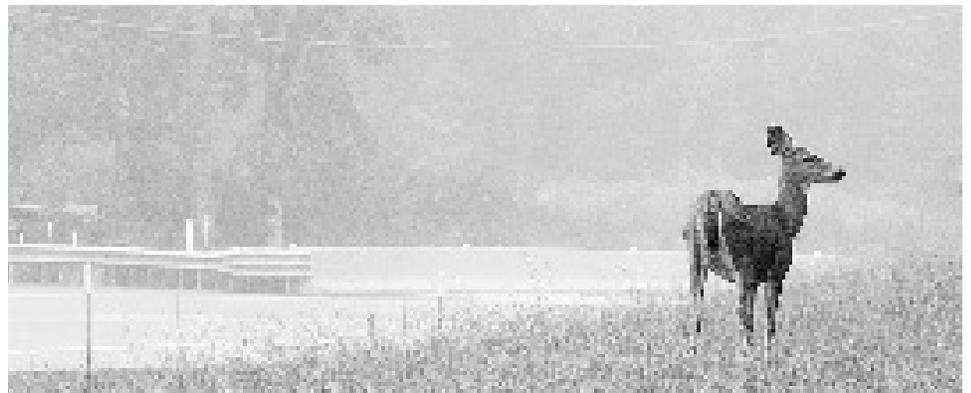
The Time-lapse Method

A method to maintain a safe following distance.



A Snapshot Summary

- Annual Driver Awareness meetings were recently held this fall. View the second page for more information!
- Bear Wise Tips available on second page.
- Renfrew County is still facing severe school bus driver shortage.



Wildlife Safety and Collision Measures

First of all, always check your following distance. Almost all rear end collisions can be prevented by maintaining a safe following distance of a minimum of 2 seconds from the vehicle in front of you. To find a safe distance, first pick a mark on the left-hand side of the road, such as a power line pole. When the rear of the vehicle ahead of you passes the landmark, count "1 thousand 1, 1 thousand 2". If the front of your vehicle passes the mark before you finish counting, you are too close, so drop back. This is called the **time-lapse method**.

Secondly, before driving anticipate what types of animals you might encounter on the road. If you encounter an animal or spot warning signs of wildlife risk, reduce your speed firmly and keep your steering in a straight line. At night, use high beams and watch for the glowing eyes of animals. Never assume that the animal will move out of your way, or stay off the road.

Lastly, don't forget to watch for black ice in the winter, look in your blind spots, and always stay cautious and defensive when driving. Never, ever become an aggressive driver. Safety comes first!



Safety Awareness Meetings: School Year 2019-2020

The RCJTC coordinates annual driver awareness meetings in each of our 7 weather zones with reviews of Sabrina's Law (anaphylaxis), Ryan's Law (asthma), student discipline, and a safety topic of choice. This year's topic of choice was Driver Hand Signals - Crossing Roads. We reviewed the new standardized bus driver crossing signal that will be used throughout the province of Ontario. Check out www.school-busridersafety.ca to review the new signal and other school bus safety topics with your family. The RCJTC would like to thank the schools and principals who hosted these meetings as well as the bus drivers who attended.



Be Bear Wise

What are Black Bears Like?

Living throughout most of Ontario, black bears primarily inhabit forested areas where they are best able to find food, refuge, and den sites. Bears usually avoid humans, but they are attracted into urban and rural areas in order to get food.

What Should I Do If I See a Bear?

When bears are caught off guard, they are stressed, and usually just want to flee. **Stop. Do not panic. Remain Calm.** If you see a bear, slowly back away while keeping the bear in sight and wait for it to leave. If the bear does not leave, throw objects, wave your arms and make noise with a whistle or an air horn. Prepare to use bear spray, and if you're near a building or vehicle get inside as a precaution. Do NOT run, climb a tree, or swim - a bear can do all these things better than you. Also, do NOT kneel down or make direct eye contact. If you have tried everything possible to get a bear to leave your property and you are afraid for your safety, you have the right to protect yourself and your property.

How Should I Prepare?

When walking outside, carry a whistle or an air horn. Learn how to use bear pepper spray and carry it somewhere that's easy to access. Also, consider carrying a long-handled axe, if you are in remote areas or deep in the forest. All odours attract bears, so consider choosing meals that require minimal preparation, and double or triple bag your food.

Bus Driver Appreciation

Every day, Renfrew County school bus drivers drive over 33,350 km daily to ensure that more than 10,000 students are safely transported to and from school. Each school bus driver takes care of roughly 70 children. School bus drivers play an incredibly important role in the lives of students, and as a result, are held to the highest safety, preparedness, and supervision standards. By providing safe transportation to school everyday backed by their hours of training, care, and skill, school bus drivers are supporting the future success of Renfrew County students.

If you or someone you know would like to be a school bus driver, please go to our website (www.onthebus.ca) for more information.



Important Dates

October |

If you are a parent with a JK to grade 3 child who uses the school bus, contact your child's school to ask about the First Rider Program.

October 21st to 25th

School Bus Safety Week! This year's theme is "My School Bus, The Safest Form of Student Transportation".

Reminders

Parents |

Check "Parent Portal" for cancellations/delays.

Young Riders |

For kindergarteners, an adult/guardian needs to accompany them to and from the bus stop. Please be 5 minutes early with your child for the bus! The bus has many children to pick up, so we all wait for the bus, the bus does not wait for us.

Public |

More school buses are on the roads now than in the summer. Be watchful of the vehicles close by, and always stop 20 metres away from the school bus.