

Improving Road Safety

*Initial report of recommendations from the
Table québécoise de la sécurité routière*

June 2007

Summary

Quebec's road safety record has improved significantly in the past 30 years, with the number of fatalities declining from 2,209 in 1973 to 610 in 2001, despite the constant increase in the number of vehicles on the roads and the number of kilometres travelled.

Although the road safety record in many countries continues to improve, this is no longer true in Quebec. In fact, since 2001, the number of deaths and the total number of victims has increased. In 2006, there were 50,443 victims, including 717 deaths. Clearly, Quebec must take immediate action in order to reverse this trend.

In December 2005, the Table québécoise de la sécurité routière [Quebec road safety task force] was created by the Minister of Transport in order to deal with this issue. The task force is a permanent discussion forum designed to make recommendations to the Minister of Transport in a bid to improve road safety.

The task force is made up of 41 members representing road users, municipalities, the police, government organizations and departments as well as other industry sectors. This is the first time that all stakeholders who are concerned about road safety have been able to discuss solutions before a single body.

More than ever before, road safety is a top-priority public health issue for Quebec's society—one that requires close co-operation with all partners acting in their respective areas.

Following eight general assembly meetings and an even larger number of meetings in small working groups, a consensus was reached regarding solutions that should help significantly decrease the number of deaths and injuries on Quebec's roads.

This initial report contains recommendations in seven areas: speeding, impaired driving, cell phone use while driving, seatbelt use, vulnerable users, the road infrastructure and municipal partnerships. The task force's 23 recommendations are presented in the table on the following page.

Speeding

1. Heighten awareness regarding the dangers and consequences of speeding
2. Oversee advertising by motor vehicle manufacturers—establish guidelines in order to ensure that their messages do not encourage risky behaviour
3. Introduce harsher penalties for excessive speeding and repeat offending
4. Implement a photo radar pilot project that includes terms to be developed in partnership to ensure that the project takes into consideration all the issues and concerns addressed by the members of the task force

Impaired driving

5. Request that public prosecutors be more severe in their recommendations to the courts regarding sentences that apply to repeat offenders and during bail hearings
6. Increase the perceived risk of apprehension
7. Heighten the awareness of the population regarding the dangers and consequences of impaired driving
8. Introduce mandatory training for waiters on the dangers and consequences of impaired driving
9. Increase the severity of the penalties related to impaired driving
10. Ask Transport Canada to study the possibility of including an alcohol ignition interlock device in the safety standards governing the manufacturing of road vehicles sold in Canada

Cell phone use while driving

11. Encourage the introduction of new legislation designed to monitor cell phone use while driving

Seatbelt use

12. Build awareness and police surveillance in order to increase the use of seatbelts

Vulnerable users

13. Increase measures designed to ensure that motorists share the road fairly with pedestrians and cyclists
14. Strengthen gradual licensing rules by preserving the mobility of new drivers, but by being more severe with drivers who fail to comply with the regulations

Road infrastructure

15. Identify and find solutions for sites with an abnormally high accident concentration
16. Implement a camera pilot project at traffic lights that includes terms to be developed in partnership to ensure that the project takes into consideration all the issues and concerns addressed by the members of the task force
17. Improve shoulders and roadsides (in rural areas)
18. Support actions designed to maintain equipment and other safety elements of the road network
19. Carry out road safety audits during the design phase of major projects

Municipal partnerships

20. Share knowledge and road safety intervention tools with municipalities
21. Design consultation mechanisms tailored to local or regional realities
22. Establish financial assistance for road safety actions led by municipalities

Heavy vehicles

23. Support the actions of the Table de concertation gouvernement industrie sur la sécurité des véhicules lourds [government industry task force on the safety of heavy vehicles]

