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Long Weekend Safety Tips

Victoria Day, more commonly known as May 2-4, is a particularly exciting long weekend for the residents of Ontario. It is the weekend we generally feel marks the arrival of the summer season – cottages are opened, gardens are planted and barbecues are lit. The promise of longer days, warmer weather, and summer vacations motivate us to get out of the city and enjoy ourselves.

Unfortunately, our enthusiasm for the first warm escape of the year can cause us to make some risky decisions, some of which can result in tragedy. This year before you plan that escape, make sure you plan for a safe drive.

Don't Speed. The majority of fatal roadway accidents occur at high speeds, so please give yourself lots of time, don't speed and pay attention to the road around you.

Stay Calm and Be Patient. Don't let the frustrations of the road get to you. Anger can seriously impair your judgement and make you take risks you wouldn't normally.

Don't Drink and Drive. There is no excuse for drinking and driving. Choose a designated driver (before you start drinking), take a cab, walk or stay home but please do not drink and drive, not only does it put yourself at risk, but others as well.

Don't Drive High. No matter what you tell yourself, it still constitutes driving under the influence. Driving high is driving impaired and it is against the law.

Ditch Distractions. Today there are lots of things to distract you while you drive – the number one culprit being cell phones. Leave the cell phone off, or mark a passenger responsible for it. If you have to have it on you, use a blue-tooth device so you can use the phone hands-free. Remember, it is illegal to use a cell phone to call or text while driving.

Feet Belong on the Floor. It's tempting as a passenger to have your feet on the dashboard during a long drive but it is also very dangerous, particularly in vehicles with passenger airbags.

Secure Fido. Pets are beloved members of the family and as such should be afforded the same safety considerations as everyone else. Pets travel safest in a vehicle when they are restrained either in a crate or by a seatbelt.

Secure Loose Items. When packing for a trip, make sure any items that are in or able to travel through the passenger cabin are secured. In case of an accident, these items can dislodge and cause serious harm to people in the vehicles.

Take a Break. It's great to enjoy a long drive on a sunny day, but that gentle warmth can make you pretty sleepy. If you feel yourself starting to doze, take a break from driving, let someone else take over or enjoy a break in a scenic rest area.

Pack an Emergency Kit. They're not just for your house. Every vehicle should have an emergency kit containing items such as a fire extinguisher, jumper cables, blankets, water and non-perishable food. You should have anything you need to be comfortable in the event that you become stuck in your car for an extended period of time.

Take a First Aid Kit. Despite all of your careful planning, accidents do happen. Make sure to have a fully stocked First Aid Kit with you wherever you go, to take care of you and your loved ones.

Follow these tips and you will guarantee yourself a safe and happy long weekend. Have fun!



Kit Care Corporation
6358 Viscount Road
Mississauga, ON Canada
L4V 1H3

Tel: 416 243-3030
or 1 800 387-1858

Fax: 416 243-3082
or 1 866 777-0787

info@kitcarecorp.com
www.kitcarecorp.com