



St. Lawrence County Traffic Safety New Traffic Safety Program Newsletter



Winter 2011

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Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Public Service Announcement Contest

The St. Lawrence County Traffic Safety Program is holding a contest for students to create Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Public Service Announcement (PSA) scripts to use for local safety initiatives. We are asking that students submit original scripts for 30-second Public Service Announcements.

Our goal is to persuade St. Lawrence County residents to adopt safer behavior when walking or biking near the road, and to convince motorists to share the road safely with pedestrians and bicyclists. The contest is sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration through a grant from the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee.

Who is Eligible?

Entries will be accepted from students, organizations, classrooms and groups in St. Lawrence County. There are two separate Grade categories: Grades 1 through 6, and Grades 7 through 12. This contest is open to all students, whether enrolled in a school or home schooled.



What are the Prizes?

The two first place winners will each receive a \$15 check donated by Davison Graphics. Second and third prize winners will receive rear

bicycle lights which were donated by Charlie Titus. Winning entries will be recorded for possible airing on YES-FM. Prizes will be awarded if we receive at least three valid entries per age level. Each entry will receive an acknowledgment of participation.

How Do You Enter the Contest?

Submit the entry form and script for 30 second PSA. PSA scripts should be submitted typed and double-spaced. There is no limit to the number of scripts you can submit to the contest, but each one must be clearly labeled with the student name, organization/class name, and school name. Mail entry form and the scripts to: **St. Lawrence County Traffic Safety Program, 80 State**

Highway 310, Suite 1, Canton NY 13617-1493.

Additional contest guidelines and some helpful references can be found on the web site www.co.st-lawrence.ny.us/Departments/CommunityServices/TrafficSafetyProgram.

For questions, contact Mary Davison at 315-379-2306, or by e-mailing mdavison@stlawco.org. Entries must be postmarked by March 30, 2011.

Authors of the winning entries (or their parents, if winners are under 18 years of age) will be required to sign a release and waiver giving the Traffic Safety Program and local radio stations permission to use the material and the author's photographs in the Traffic Safety public service announcement campaign. All entries will become the property of St. Lawrence County.

Please PRINT CLEARLY - If you are selected as a winner, this information will be printed on a certificate.



Grade of Student:(s) _____ School Name: _____

Name of Student(s) _____ (2) _____

Organization/Class/Group _____ Contact Person/Teacher _____

Preferred Mailing Address: _____

Contact Phone-Day#: _____ Home Phone #: _____

Email: _____

If selected as winner, should the check be issued to the student(s) or organization? _____

Snow Plow Reminder

Winters are unpredictable, but chances are there will be many weeks more of snow, slush, and ice to contend with. So far this year, every storm has brought a rash of fender-benders. Snow plow drivers are reporting that motorists just aren't giving them room to do their job. The following tips will help you to be safer sharing the road with snow plows.



The safest place to drive is at least 8 car lengths behind a snow plow. This is because you can find the clearest road surface and best traction if you

are a safe distance behind a plow. Also, snow clearing equipment may follow an unpredictable route, and might need to make wide turns. Crowding will just put your vehicle in harm's way. The extra size and weight of snow plows make them difficult to maneuver and stop quickly, especially since the highway ahead is usually slippery and snow-covered.

Like other large trucks, road clearing vehicles have many blind spots that prevent drivers from seeing vehicles that are too close. De-icing equipment and large plow blades also restrict the driver's vision. You should be able to see the driver's face in the

plow's side mirrors. If not, the driver can't see you.

Passing a snow plow is dangerous for a number of reasons. A snow plow creates a ridge of snow to its side that can cause you to lose control of your vehicle. Also, snow clearing can kick up a snow cloud that causes total white-out conditions—for drivers traveling in either direction. It may be difficult for drivers to see the blade of the plow, which can extend several feet ahead of the truck and up to 30 inches beyond the truck's width, often extending over the center line of the roadway.

Never pass a snow plow on the right!

It is against the law to park in a manner that impedes snow removal, and the offending vehicle can be towed at the owner's expense. Also, those who are clearing snow from private property should not shovel or blow snow from sidewalks or driveways into the road. This could create hazards for motorists, and possibly expose you to liability for damages or injuries. Also, it is against the law to do so.

(Sources: NYS DOT web site, DOT Brochure, *Ice and Snow, Take it Slow*)



Featured Web Site: Distraction.gov

In response to the estimated 5500 distracted driving deaths each year, the US Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood has led efforts to stop this growing trend. Initially Secretary LaHood convened a summit to study all forms of distracted driving.



Testimony came from industry, highway safety advocates, and families of some of those killed or injured in crashes caused by drivers who weren't paying attention to the

road. During the summit, texting and driving emerged as one of the most deadly forms of distraction behind the wheel.

One Virginia Tech study showed that text messaging increased the risk of crashing by over 23 percent. This may be due to the average duration of 4.6 seconds per text message. For drivers going 55 mph, this equates to traveling the length of a football field without looking at the road.

Analysis of data showed that there were also 448,000 injury crashes due to a variety of distract-

tions such as talking or texting on a cell phone, use of in-vehicle technologies, eating, etc. The numbers underestimate the actual scope of the problem, since pre-crash behavior can't always be determined. In some fatal and personal injury collisions, the phone records are subpoenaed as part of the investigation to determine if phone use contributed to the crash.

The Secretary is involved in ongoing efforts to address distracted driving, including studies of enforcement campaigns and public information initia-

tives. To show the devastating, real-life results of distracted driving, the DOT unveiled the latest in its "Faces of Distracted Driving" video series. The series features real incidents from across the country who have been injured or lost a loved one in crashes involving cell phones or texting. These stories can be accessed at distraction.gov and clicking on the video screen or the "view the stories" button of the right side of the home page. The site also features news articles, statistics, and other information about this important topic.