

ROADSIDE HEROES NEED ROOM TO WORK

This winter, thousands of Albertans will hear ambulance sirens instead of sleigh bells due to poor road conditions and improper driver care. In fact, nearly half of all collisions in Alberta take place between November and March, while the Christmas season represents one of the riskiest times to be on the road.

According to Alberta Transportation, traffic collisions peak in November (11.8%), followed by January (9.8%) and December (9.5%). Collisions causing property damage also see their highest numbers in November (12.1%), while the holiday season (December 24-28) is among the worst for accidents in the province – 1,390 in 2014, compared to 1,034 over the May long weekend.

When your office is the road shoulder, these stats are anything but comforting. That's why AMA is working hard on behalf of Service Providers to beef up driver awareness of the traffic laws designed to keep roadside heroes safe. Earlier this year, we partnered with the RCMP and Alberta Transportation for a Give Us Room to Work event in which laser radar and "positive ticketing" (a friendly education in lieu of a fine) reminded motorists to slow to the required 60 km/hr in the adjacent lane or move over when a tow truck has its amber lights flashing.

Local media outlets were in attendance, along with Alberta Transportation Minister Brian Mason, AMA's Jeff Kasbrick, Vice-President of Government and Stakeholder Relations, and members of local law enforcement.

"You can see by the demonstration right here that we need to educate more drivers so they know they need to slow down," said Minister Mason. "First responders make your safety their priority, so please make their safety your priority."

Tow operator Ivan Lamarche remarked that in his eight years towing, he's had bottles thrown at him, obscenities hurled, motorists stop mid-traffic just to yell, and more near-misses than he can count. He hoped the Give Us Room to Work event would help give Alberta drivers an idea of what, and more importantly who, is at stake when they disregard working tow trucks.

"People are usually passing us on the QE2 at 100 km/hr or more," said Ivan. "Try lying underneath a vehicle when that happens!"



Fellow towman Darren Klassen was last to speak, offering a heartfelt call to action for motorists to slow down so he can go home each night to his wife and children.

"AMA has the best high-risk training* around, but it can only do so much if drivers don't give us room to work," said Darren. "It just takes that first person to slow down or move over, and everyone else tends to follow. That makes the biggest difference to us."

* Watch for an update on AMA's NEW high-risk training for Service Providers, coming soon!

THE WINTER ISSUE

We're in for a harsh winter, according to the Farmers' Almanac – not to mention Jon Snow (Game of Thrones, anyone?).

In this issue, we take a look at what the chilly forecast means for your business, as well as your personal life. From holiday stress to the effects of cold weather on vehicles – and any pets locked inside them – we've got you covered. We also offer an insider's look at the latest AMA news, including technical tips; headlines from the automotive industry; a feature profile on Any Time Towing; and even a new study suggesting videogames make you a better driver! It's all part of our commitment to keeping you informed.

After all, we're Practically Family.

Your Service Provider Network Advisors