

# The faster you go, the harder you hit and the further you travel while you react

*Drivers speed because they don't see anything wrong with it. Think again—speed is a risk to your personal safety*

In the past year or so, we've conducted many surveys, tracking down and diligently recording your opinions on a variety of road-safety related matters.

I can't tell you how heartwarming it was when about three-quarters of the Manitobans we surveyed confidently responded that speeding on our streets and roads is a very serious, or somewhat serious problem.

Indicating an even stronger support and understanding of road safety, most of those surveyed also felt that a driver exceeding the speed limit was more likely to wind up in an accident (which is the truth, by the way).

So, being the optimist that I am, I took that as a terrific sign that yes, people were getting the message! I can't tell you how excited I felt! There I was, proudly watching the pro-road safety movement gather momentum and sweep across the province (at the speed limit, of course).



**Road  
Wise**

**Paul  
Allen**

One question, though: umm... where did you all go?

## Where are you?

I mean, you're out there, I'm sure. I guess you haven't been out too much lately, though, because it seems to me that most of the drivers I've seen around these days are not members of that forward thinking, safety conscious majority who said, "yes, speeding is a bad, bad thing, and we don't do it." The greater part of the drivers I'm talking about would more likely respond with, "speeding is a positive display of driving ability, especially in construction zones or after big snowfall."

But seriously, I am deeply disturbed by the average speed people travel in this city. I'm afraid I haven't spent much time outside of Winnipeg yet, but judging by the provincial stats piling up on my desk, I would hazard a guess that it's the same everywhere in Manitoba.

I've asked around and have been given a variety of answers as to why people around here drive like they need to reach their destination in five minutes, regardless of the distance between A and B. Some say that because we lead such busy lives we have to speed to catch up. We "always" drive the speed limit, but can't today because we're late for work, or have to get to the daycare before it closes, or need to get the kids to one of their zillions of activities on time.

I've also been told it's because in Manitoba the roads are mostly flat and straight, so people believe they are "safe" zipping along because they'll

see trouble long before they get close to it and need to take action.

Here's the one I believe the most. Drivers speed because they don't see anything wrong with it, and most importantly they don't believe they're going to get caught.

OK. Here's what's wrong with speed. Speed is an immediate risk to your personal safety. Speed increases the distance your vehicle travels while you react to another car, a kid on a bike or a sharp corner. It also increases the distance you need to stop your car, and reduces the effectiveness of your vehicle's safety features.

Not convinced yet? Winnipeg police say that unsafe speed was a factor in 25 per cent of fatal crashes in Winnipeg during the last two years.

## Busted!

And the police would like me to remind you that yes, you could very easily get caught. They run campaign

after campaign geared specifically to catching speeding drivers, and will continue to do so until the incorrect public perception—you'll get away with it—changes to the correct assumption that you'll be busted in a very big way.

Now for my final turn on the soapbox. Obeying the posted speed limit is the law. Manitobans do not have, nor should they have, the right to choose which laws to obey and which to disregard. Period. And that includes laws dictating how fast you drive.

OK, I'm off the soapbox, at least until next week. Until then, be **RoadWise**.

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