



## **Ontario sees 7% improvement in frequency of car crashes**

*Brockville tops Allstate Canada's Ontario Safe Driving Study*

**TORONTO, ON— November 29, 2011—** Allstate Insurance Company of Canada's latest Ontario Safe Driving Study shows Ontario drivers have improved over the past two years. Overall, Ontario's collision frequency rate had a seven percent decrease between 2007–2009 and 2009–2011. According to the data, Brockville had the lowest collision rate, while five GTA communities had the highest collision rates in the province. The Ontario Safe Driving Study looks at collision frequencies in 45 communities in the province and ranks them based on Allstate Canada claims data for 2009–2011 and also compares them to data from 2007–2009. "We are pleased to see the overall decrease in Ontario's collision rate and hope to see this trend continue," says Tony Irwin, spokesperson for Allstate Canada. "To help, we are reminding drivers to be attentive and patient behind the wheel. We have developed a series of safe driving tips at [goodhandsadvice.ca](http://goodhandsadvice.ca) that we encourage drivers to read and keep in mind whenever they are on the road," says Irwin.

There will also be an event in Brockville today with the city's mayor, David Henderson, and Chief John Gardiner of the Brockville Police Service to congratulate the city's drivers for having Ontario's lowest collision rate.

"At Allstate Canada we believe the more we bring attention to road safety — whether by examining trends in collision data or demonstrating the implications of driving and using cell phones at a distracted driving course — the closer we can get to achieving our goal of making communities safer for everyone. The Ontario Safe Driving Study is an opportunity to shine a spotlight on what's happening on our roads and to kick-start a discussion between drivers, governments, police and other organizations about what makes a safe driver," says Irwin.

Allstate Canada calculates the Ontario Safe Driving collision frequency rates by dividing the number of claims made with Allstate Canada within a community by the number of cars insured by Allstate Canada in that community. Only communities where Allstate Canada insures a minimum of 900 cars between 2009 and 2011 are ranked. Collisions are linked to the address of the insured, not where the collision took place. Rankings are based solely on Allstate Canada's car collision frequency data and are in no way tied to insurance rates.

### **Data highlights from the 2011 Ontario Safe Driving Study:**

- The top five cities with the lowest collision frequency rates for 2009–2011 are Brockville (2.48 per cent), Welland (2.95 per cent), Chatham (3.26 per cent), Amherstburg (3.50 per cent), and St. Thomas (3.55 per cent).

- GTA communities ranked 41 through 45 out of 45 communities for 2009–2011: Bolton (5.96 per cent), Markham (6.13 per cent), Toronto (6.16 per cent), Thornhill (6.24 per cent) and Brampton (6.78 per cent).
- Only five cities had a higher collision frequency rate in 2009–2011 than in 2007–2009: Belleville (moving from the top ranked community last year to number 13), North Bay (previously number 14 and now number 32), Markham (number 28 to 42), Brampton (number 38 to 45) and Toronto (number 35 to 43).
- Northern Ontario continues to be the region where drivers have the lowest crash frequency rate, with three Northern Ontario cities ranked in the top ten: Thunder Bay (6), Sault Ste. Marie (9) and Greater Sudbury (10).

Allstate Canada's recent Get to Know Your Insurance survey also shows that many drivers do not know what to do after they have been in a car collision. The survey found 21 per cent of Canadians would accidentally break the law and not report a collision to their insurance provider, even though it's mandatory to report one within 24 hours. "Regardless of who caused the collision, drivers should remember to collect and exchange information with the other driver about the car and driver and any witnesses to the crash," says Irwin.

Allstate Canada offers these tips to help start the conversation about safe driving:

- **Keep your eyes on the road** — Distracted driving is the cause of eight out of every 10 collisions. Distractions can include changing your music, tending to a child in the back seat or using your cell phone to talk or text. In Ontario it's against the law to use a handheld cell phone or other hand-held communications and entertainment devices in the car, but even using a hands-free phone can distract you from driving. If you need to make a call, find a place to park the car and then pick up the phone.
- **Be aware of road conditions** — Drive slowly and with caution when battling the elements of snow, ice or rain as visibility declines and the ability to control your vehicle becomes more difficult. Remember to clear snow from your car before you head off.
- **Leave a safe distance between vehicles** — Maintain at least 'three steamboats' (seconds) between your vehicle and the one in front of you in good driving conditions. In wet conditions, leave 'six steamboats,' and in poor/slippery conditions, leave nine to 12 'steamboats.'
- **Avoid reacting to and creating "road rage"** — Angry drivers tend to hastily make decisions that affect drivers around them. Always try to remain calm when driving.
- **Drive the speed limit** — Drivers can reduce the need to speed by leaving early and allowing extra time to arrive at their destination. It's better to be late than to rush and cause a collision.
- **Break bad habits** — A safe driver will always obey the rules of the road. Use your turn signal to indicate a turn or lane change, come to a complete stop at a stop sign, only

enter an intersection if you can cross it before the light turns red and don't jump the queue by sneaking into a lane at the last minute.

- **Maintain Your Car** — Make sure your brakes, exhaust, tires, lights, battery and hoses are all in good working order. Keep windshield wipers in good working order, too.
- **Don't Drive While Impaired** — According to MADD Canada, every day, on average, four Canadians are killed and 190 are injured in impaired driving crashes. Plan ahead, designate a sober driver, take a taxi, walk with a friend, make arrangements to stay over or take local transit.

### **Take the proper steps after a car collision**

Unfortunately most drivers will at some point be in a collision. Collisions are often traumatic, as they happen quickly and can catch us off guard. It's difficult to think clearly and remember what to do immediately after one has happened. If you are in a collision, regardless of who caused it, collect and exchange the following information with the other driver:

- license plate number;
- full name and contact information;
- insurance company;
- type, colour and model of the vehicle;
- number of occupants in each vehicle;
- location of the accident;
- the full name and phone number of any present witnesses.

To see where Ontario cities ranked, view the complete 2011 Ontario Safe Driving Study visit <http://bit.ly/AllstateSafeDriving>.

### **Study Methodology**

Allstate Canada conducted an in-depth analysis of company collision data to determine the safest communities in Ontario based on the frequency of collisions. The study spans a 24-month period beginning July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2011 and also offers a comparison to the data from July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2009.

To ensure the data provides a realistic outlook of what is happening on Ontario roadways only communities with at least 900 cars insured by Allstate Canada during the 24-month period were included in the study. Claims data is limited to collisions for which there was a payout, claims for incidents such as break-ins or vandalism are not included in this analysis. Two-year periods were chosen to provide a larger sample for more meaningful analysis. Survey data ranks

frequency of collisions, not severity of accident. Collision data can be traced back to the registered car address.

### **About Allstate Insurance Company of Canada**

Allstate Insurance Company of Canada is one of Canada's leading producers and distributors of home and auto insurance products. "The Good Hands Network®" enables consumers to contact Allstate Canada through one of 93 community-based Agencies, directly online at [www.allstate.ca](http://www.allstate.ca) and through the Customer Contact Centre at 1-800-Allstate. Allstate Canada is committed to making a positive difference in the communities in which it operates and has partnered with organizations such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD Canada), Crime Stoppers, United Way and Junior Achievement. In 2010, Allstate Canada, in partnership with the National Hockey League Players' Association (NHLPA), created the Allstate All-Canadians program, a mentorship program designed to guide the next generation of Canada's hockey youth. Learn more about this program at [www.allstate.all-canadians.com](http://www.allstate.all-canadians.com). To learn more about Allstate Canada, visit [www.goodhandsadvice.ca](http://www.goodhandsadvice.ca) or [www.allstate.ca](http://www.allstate.ca).

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