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# Traffic Safety Day

How-To, Tips, & Tricks

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## Purpose of this Resource

To provide an overview of how to plan and run a Traffic Safety Day event, including possible partners and lessons learned from past events.

## What is Traffic Safety Day?

Alberta Transportation's Office of Traffic Safety encourages communities to hold a Traffic Safety Day during the month of September, which is Back to School Safety month on the [Alberta Traffic Safety Calendar](#). Communities can, of course, hold a Traffic Safety Day at any time that works best for them.

A typical Traffic Safety Day event has groups of students/children/youth moving between stations run by local traffic safety stakeholders to learn about different traffic safety topics.

## Station Ideas

- How to cross a crosswalk (point, pause, proceed)
  - Why and how to properly wear a bicycle helmet
  - Rail (and LRT) safety
  - School bus safety
  - Emergency vehicle safety, sirens, and lights
  - Traffic safety question and answer game (this can be a great way to see what participants are learning at other stations)
  - *TIP: children will understand and recall safety messages best if they can actually practice the safety behaviour. For example, if the event location has a crosswalk, use it or set up a mock crosswalk with tape or chalk. Another example is to have a school bus at the event so children can practice getting on and off safely, and other safe bus behaviours.*
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## Potential Partners

- Local schools, parks, recreation centres, community spaces
  - Traffic Safety Days are often held at a school, but have also been held in parks, on legislature grounds, in parking lots, and in other community spaces. Events usually involve primary grade students, but could be tailored to meet the age the community would like to include.
- Local enforcement (RCMP, municipal police, community peace officers etc.), emergency, and/or fire services
  - Local enforcement and other first responders may be able to bring vehicles and demonstrate what lights and sirens sound like so children know what to expect. They can also often speak to crosswalk safety, bicycle and pedestrian safety, and many other topics.
- Alberta Health Services
  - AHS [Health Promotion Facilitators](#) and School Health Promotion Facilitators can speak to many topics, including bicycle safety. They may also be able to help identify and work with a school.
- CN Police ([Operation Lifesaver](#))
  - “Operation Lifesaver Presenters are trained and certified to provide important safety information to school children, community service clubs, civic groups, school bus operators, emergency service personnel, truck drivers, motor coach and transit drivers, newly licensed drivers and others.”
- Alberta Motor Association (AMA)
  - Schools with an AMA [School Safety Patrol](#) may have their patrol participate. AMA may also be able to support an event or lead a station with its [Way to Be](#) program resources.
- Student Transportation
  - Student Transportation companies may be able to provide a bus and driver to lead a school bus safety station. When an event is held at or with a school, that school’s transport company would be a great partner.
- Other community stakeholders
  - Be creative! Consider partnering with local businesses like bicycle shops or outdoor goods stores, youth groups like Girl Guides or church groups, or other groups with an interest in traffic safety like Citizens on Patrol or MADD.

- Community Safety Champions
  - Look for influencers in the community who can support your event and help you celebrate success. Consider your local MLA and municipal council.
  - Contact businesses and encourage them to put traffic safety messaging in their storefront windows or company vehicles.
- Media
  - Consider informing and inviting local media to spread the word about your event and the safety messages delivered during the event.
  - Encourage local radio to get involved so the community thinks and talks safety for the duration of your event.
  - Remember to have children's' parents/guardians sign media release forms if there will be photos or video taken of the event.
    - *TIP: group children who do not have a media release together, so it is easy for media (or other photographers) to avoid capturing them on film.*

## Planning a Traffic Safety Day

### Identify the Event Structure

- Do you want to have stations? Or some other set up? If stations, do groups go through in order or is the set up more like a fair?
- Do you want to align with the [Alberta Traffic Safety Calendar](#) and have the event in September? Or would a different time work better for you?
- What age of participants are you targeting?
- Do you want to hold the event at/with a school? Or at a different location?
  - Consider how many children are in the grades that you are targeting. If there are multiple classes in that grade, can you accommodate all of them?
  - *TIP: If your event will be at a school in September, you'll need to have all your planning done by the previous June, before school lets out for the year!*
- Do you want the event to be indoors or outdoors?
  - *TIP: If your event is outdoors, have a backup plan in case of poor weather. Can the event move from a school field into a gymnasium? Will you go ahead outside even in poor weather?*

- How long do you want the event to be?
  - How many stations or activities do you hope to have? How long do you want to give each one?
  - Will the event run over lunch time? If you are planning to feed participants, have you considered allergies and dietary requirements?
  - *TIP: if the event is at a school, consider running it from just after school begins until recess. If that won't be enough time, the school may be able to delay recess on that day.*
- How many volunteers will you need?
  - In addition to partners to run the stations, you'll need people to help move groups of participants around the stations and to be available to handle any issues that arise.
- Will your plan require funding? If so, do you already have the funds required? Could you look for funding or donations from local partners (for example, might a local shop or grocery store donate coffee or snacks)? Perhaps you could offer them acknowledgement/advertising as a sponsor in return? Have you considered applying for an [Alberta Traffic Safety Fund](#) grant?
  - *TIP: applying for a grant can take time. The ATSF guidelines state it can take up to eight weeks to receive a decision. If your plan depends on grant funding, ensure you apply in enough time to receive a decision well before your planned event.*

## Partner Up!

- Contact potential partners and volunteers and secure commitment for your event.
- Consider what other resources you or your partners might need (print material, promotional items, etc.). Some resources are free to order from [Alberta Transportation](#).
  - *TIP: be sure to order resources with enough time to receive the shipment. At least 10 business days before the event is suggested.*
- If you would like support in learning how to organize and run an event, consider contacting Alberta Transportation's Community Mobilization Program at [communitymobilization@saferoads.com](mailto:communitymobilization@saferoads.com).

## Finalize the Plan

- With a location and partners secured, finalize a plan for the day.
  - Address of location.
  - Start and end times for the event, as well as set up times.
  - Station partners and activities.
  - Volunteers and their roles.
  - Consider how participants arrive at the site, get split into groups, go to their first stations, move through the stations, and leave the site.
    - Each group should have at least one adult volunteer.
    - Have a signal (like a whistle or an announcement) to let participants know it's time to move to the next station.
    - Some events have had a 'passport' where the participants get a punch, stamp, or sticker at each station.
    - *TIP: If possible, have participants split into groups before the event and assign each child a colour, animal, or some other identifier. Then assign each station with the identifier that goes to them first (e.g. blue group goes to crosswalk safety first, etc.).*
- Send the final agenda to all partners and volunteers.
  - *TIP: If the event is at a school in September, make sure to send the final agenda by the previous June and then check in with everyone first thing in September when school is back in.*

## Invitations & Messages

- Media
  - If you would like media to attend, draft a media release to send to local media with the purpose, time, and location.
    - *TIP: your partners may have a Communications or Marketing area who could help draft and send out a media release.*

- Local Champions
  - Local champions and dignitaries could be invited to help with the event as a partner or volunteer, or could be invited to attend, observe, and celebrate.
    - *TIP: dignitaries in particular will need as much advance notice as possible to put the event in their calendars. Consider sending a hold-the-date in advance of an actual invitation once you have confirmed a date.*
- Social Media
  - Develop messaging about your event that you can post to your social media channels and encourage your partners to re-post. Also look for others, such as [@ABTransComm](#), who might re-post your messages.

## Running a Traffic Safety Day

### Identify an Event Lead

- It's a good idea to identify someone to act as the Event Lead. This person would be the main contact for all partners and volunteers to go to with questions on the day of the event. The Event Lead can be responsible for coordinating set up and making sure groups are moving through the event on time.
  - *TIP: have a backup Event Lead in case the main Lead cannot attend the event!*
- If the Event Lead is identified in time, include his/her name and contact information in the final agenda sent to partners and volunteers so they know who to look for.

### Event Set Up/Take Down

- Ensure you have access to the event venue early enough to set up the stations before the event starts. Check with your partners to see how much time they need, but planning for an hour is suggested.
  - Consider how partners will get supplies to and from the site. Is there somewhere to pull up and unload vehicles? If not, are carts available?
  - Do venue building maintenance staff need to get anything set up or cleared away before the event? Do they need access to the site by a particular time to set up for a future event?
  - *TIP: make sure the Event Lead arrives before the partners and volunteers are due to arrive.*

- Make sure that each partner has enough space and has any other requirements for their activities.
  - How much space do they need? Do they need tables and/or chairs? Do they need power? Do they prefer being indoors or outdoors (if there is a choice)?
- If providing hospitality, make sure someone is prepared to accept (or prepare) the food/drink and there is an out-of-the way place to set it up.
  - *TIP: even if you are not providing food for participants, it is nice to be able to provide coffee/tea/water/snacks for your partners and volunteers!*

## Evaluating a Traffic Safety Day

### Identify Your Objectives

- Identify what you are trying to achieve by holding a Traffic Safety Day. For example, some possible objectives might be:
  - To educate participants on how to safely use a crosswalk (or whatever topics are included in your event).
  - To learn how to organize and run a Traffic Safety Day.
  - To form partnerships with local traffic safety organizations and stakeholders.
  - To have all Grade 3 students at School ABC participate in Traffic Safety Day.
- Your evaluation should help you determine whether you met your objectives and how you can improve in planning future events.

### Formal Feedback

- Formal feedback can be obtained from participants, partners, and volunteers through surveys, discussion, or focus groups.
- When developing questions, look to your objectives. For the examples above, some possible questions might be:
  - Were all participants able to demonstrate point, pause, proceed after visiting the crosswalk safety station? If a survey or discussion is completed sometime after the event, are they still able to demonstrate it at that later date?
  - Did organizers learn how to run a Traffic Safety Day? Did the event occur as planned? Do organizers now feel able to plan and run future events?

- Did event organizers form new partnerships? Did organizers help form partnerships between any stakeholders? Would event partners be willing to participate in future events?
- Did all students participate? Why or why not? Was the target audience appropriate?
- Also consider asking different questions of the organizing team (see Action Review below). Did you have enough time? Did you have appropriate resources? What were the biggest successes and challenges in planning the event?

## Informal Feedback

- Try to capture comments, feedback, and suggestions that are made during the event by participants, partners, and volunteers. These are valuable because they show the immediate and emotional reactions to the event.

## Action Review

- Consider holding an Action Review with the organizing team. During an Action Review, a team quickly discusses and captures what they've learned by asking four questions:
  1. What happened?
  2. What was supposed to happen?
  3. Why was there a difference/what caused the change?
  4. What are we going to do better next time?
- An Action Review should only take 15-20 minutes and should focus on the project objectives, not on people.
  - An Action Review should take place as soon as possible after the event being reviewed. If you would like to include partners and volunteers, consider asking them to plan to spend 15 minutes after the event engaging in an Action Review before taking down their stations.