



June 29, 2005
For immediate release

Bad Weather Drives Injury Risk for Canadian Motorists up 70 Percent

Toronto, Ontario – Urban Canadians are 70 percent more likely to be involved in an injury-related motor vehicle collision when driving during bad weather than normal seasonal weather. That is the principal finding of a report released today by the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction (ICLR).

Dr. Jean Andrey, Associate Dean of Geography at the University of Waterloo, met with news media and other interested stakeholders in Toronto, to discuss the results of the ICLR funded research paper “Toward a National Assessment of the Travel Risks Associated with Inclement Weather”, penned by her and colleagues. The report has two components. It provides detailed risk data from a motor-vehicle collision analysis involving 27 major urban areas in Canada over a 17 year period, and it contains information on driver adjustments during inclement weather derived from a case study done on Gardiner Expressway in Toronto.

Dr. Andrey said, “The research shows that the risk of being injured during poor weather increases for all levels of injury severity. However, the greatest increases are for minimal and minor injury, because motorists tend to slow down during inclement weather.” She added, “What is important is that different types of precipitation produce different injuries, citing results taken during rainfall, snowfall, and freezing rain mixed with snow.” She cautioned, however, that weather-related driving risks are not the same in all cities, with large urban areas being more vulnerable due to challenging driving and high traffic volumes.

Paul Kovacs, Executive Director of ICLR, told the media that, “The Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction works to support disaster safety research, seeking to help build more resilient communities. Each year, there are disaster deaths, injuries and property damage, and we believe that the greatest tragedy is that many of these losses are preventable. The ICLR seeks to support research that will help us to better understand why these losses occur, and share this knowledge as a means of reducing the risk of future fatalities, injuries and damage.”

Dr. Andrey said, “Our study of the Gardiner Expressway showed that motorists know they need to adjust their driving speeds and increase distance between vehicles to improve safety, but the magnitude of these adjustments is not enough during adverse weather.”

Mr. Kovacs concluded, “Dr. Andrey has completed important research about vehicle collisions during inclement weather, and Canada 's insurance companies, through the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction, are pleased to have supported this analysis.”

Established in 1998 by Canada’s property and casualty insurers, ICLR is an independent, not-for-profit research institute based in Toronto and at the University of Western Ontario in London, Canada. ICLR is a centre of excellence for disaster loss prevention research and education. ICLR’s research staff is internationally recognized for pioneering work in a number of fields including wind and seismic engineering, atmospheric sciences, water resources engineering and economics. Multi-disciplined research is a foundation for ICLR’s work to build communities more resilient to disasters.

For further information, please contact: Glenn McGillivray, Managing Director, ICLR, tel. 416/364-8677, ext. 3216, fax 416/364-5889, gmcgillivray@iclr.org