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Pace Car Program Overview

- [Pace Car Community Supporter's Pledge](#) (pdf)
- [Pace Car Sign-up Sheet](#) (pdf)

If your community is concerned about safety and the hazards associated with speeding vehicles and unsafe driving, then why not become a Pace Car Community!

It's Simple! Residents sign the Pace Car Supporters Pledge and proudly display the official Pace Car emblems on their cars.

When driving, residents agree to drive the posted speed limit. Cars become a "mobile speed bump" slowing speeding traffic behind them. Traffic is not only calmed on one street, but throughout a neighbourhood. Drivers also agree to be more aware of, and courteous to, other road users, especially pedestrians and cyclists.

Many Pace Cars calm traffic throughout a neighbourhood. The more people who participate, the better it works!

To reduce the chance of road rage, it's important for Pace Car drivers to display the Pace Car stickers so other motorists know why they are driving courteously. If someone urgently wishes to pass, a Pace Car driver simply pulls over and lets them by.

When not in cars, communities can reclaim the streets by using them more often for walking, cycling, and neighbourhood socializing. Making streets feel more like outdoor living rooms encourages drivers to act as a guest.

Believe it or not, the simple presence of people in the street helps reduce traffic speed.

Reducing car use - tackling the root problem. If we are to tackle the root causes of traffic problems, we must strive to reduce both speed and volume. This makes streets more livable, and frees up road and parking spaces that can be recycled into valuable community spaces including: pedestrian and cycle boulevards, green spaces for safe play, and a creative combination of shops and residences that can enhance a neighbourhood.

Most people can significantly reduce their car use (usually by 20%-50%) by organizing their travel more efficiently. The rewards are a saving in time and money. One of the commitments of the Pace Car Pledge is to reduce car use.

Collisions Are Not Accidents

Our local streets are becoming speedways. Children are particularly vulnerable because they face traffic threats that exceed their understanding and abilities. There's nothing unexpected about a speeding motorist not being able to stop in time to avoid hitting a child.

Steps for Organizing a Pace Car Program In Your Community

Here is a general process for launching a Pace Car Program in your community:

- Step 1: Identify Interest in the Pace Car Program
- Step 2: Develop a Program Team
- Step 3: Gather and Distribute Information
- Step 4: Implement and Celebrate
- Step 5: Follow-up

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Step 1: Identify Interest in Pace Car Program

Are residents in your community concerned about safety in their neighbourhood and the hazards associated with speeding vehicles? Have concerned citizens worked with the community police to develop solutions to the problem?

Any organization or individual can initiate the Pace Car program - public health units, city traffic departments, neighborhood associations, downtown business associations, school boards or police

departments. It is vital that the program be seen as a partnership between the municipality and residents but it is possible for residents to start the program without municipal support. A municipality, however, should not introduce the program unless it has a partnership with some sector of the community. It may be helpful to have a partnership agreement signed by all participating partners. Whether or not there is a formal or informal agreement, the roles of each party should be clearly defined.

Step 2: Develop a Program Team

There are a variety of potential organizations that can participate as key players:

- School Advisory Councils
- Student Leaders
- Injury Prevention Organizations
- Public Health Units
- Company Fleet/Transportation Coordinators
- Teachers and school administration
- School Boards
- Municipal Officials
- Neighbourhood Association reps
- Local businesses
- Parent-Teacher groups
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Daycares
- Municipal Transportation
- School Advisory Council/PTA
- Local police/EMS
- Neighbours/community members
- Traffic/Transit authority
- Service Clubs

Find a few individuals or a group willing to champion the program - people who feel strongly about it and will inspire others to get involved. Providing the support to get the Pace Car program rolling is not a huge time commitment (approximately 5 days), but it can significantly improve the program's success.

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Step 3: Gather and Distribute Information

Gather Speed Data

Measuring speed in your neighbourhood before and after the program is essential to assess how well the program is working in your community. It will pave the way for more buy-in once the program is established. Work with your community police to set up a speed trailer before your program starts. About three to four months after the program starts, the police can measure the speeds again to compare the difference. Use this information to monitor the success of the program in your community.

Distribute Information

Develop and circulate a flyer, send letters to community groups or present the program at a community forum to let the people know that a Pace Car program is starting in their area. This might result in new members for your team. The following description of the program can assist you in developing content for your materials:

The Pace Car program helps stop speeding on neighbourhood streets. It's simple - drivers in your community sign the Pace Car pledge, and then proudly display the official Pace Car emblems on their cars. By agreeing to drive within the speed limit, cars become "mobile speed bumps", slowing the traffic behind them. Drivers also agree to be more aware of and courteous to other road users, especially pedestrians and cyclists. Many Pace Cars can effectively calm traffic throughout your neighbourhood. The more people who participate, the better it works! Community organizations are encouraged to sign-up pace car drivers in their communities who will take part in the program for one year.

Increasing distribution points:

The following may be good distribution points for promotional information about the program:

- Local government offices
- Police stations
- Libraries, community and recreation centres
- Schools & Daycares
- Neighborhood stores
- Gas stations
- Retail outlets and Malls
- Neighborhood associations
- Neighborhood watch
- Block Parents

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Step 4: Implement and Celebrate

Your Pace Car program launch should be a celebration! Make it a big event - ideally, tag the launch to another local event where there will be many community members attending. Invite local politicians and media to sign-up and heartily promote the program. Download [sign-up sheets](#) and [pledges forms](#) from the Safe Kids Canada Web site www.safekidscanada.ca.

You can order window clings and bumper stickers on our Safe Tip Line: **1 888 SAFE-TIP (723-3847)**

Marking Pace Cars

It is extremely important that Pace Cars be easily identifiable as a Pace Car so motorists behind know why the person is driving within the speed limit.

Maintain Continual Presence

Continue to advertise the Pace Car program in your community at local events to sign up more Pace Car drivers. Have Pace Car pledges and clings available in other community locations on an ongoing basis to recruit Pace Car drivers. Remember that drivers should renew their commitment after one year and that anyone no longer participating should remove the stickers and decals from their car.

Step 5: Follow-up

Safe Kids Canada welcomes your feedback on the successes and challenges of the Pace Car program in your neighbourhood! Please e-mail us (kristen.gane@sickkids.ca) to share your stories and photos.

Frequently Asked Questions - Pace Car

Will my car really make a difference?

Yes. We only need a small percentage of vehicles acting as Pace Cars to slow traffic community-wide. This starts a positive cycle. People feel more comfortable walking or cycling, which reduces traffic levels, making streets even safer, meaning even more people can walk or cycle.

Does the Pace Car provoke road rage?

No. Many people who have signed up to the Pace Car Program were already driving the speed limit. They report that incidents of road rage decrease when they label their car as a Pace Car. The Pace Car sticker informs other drivers as to why they are driving the speed limit.

What happens if I accidentally speed?

Take a breath and slow down. The Pace Car pledge is a declaration of intent, not a legally binding contract. Kicking the speed habit can be hard work. Allow yourself more time to get places so you won't be so tempted to speed.

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Do I only act as a Pace Car in my neighbourhood or on all streets?

On all streets. The Pace Car is a kind of treaty between neighbourhoods. You respect the quality of life in our neighbourhood and we will do the same for you. The Pace Car promotes civility and mutual respect on our streets.

What are the most creative ways to get the maximum number of Pace Cars in our city?

Here are a few ways you can enhance Pace Car in your area:

Local Traffic Department:

One option that municipalities can consider is determining that if a certain percentage of households in a street block sign up for Pace Car, that block can call themselves a Pace Street. Pace Streets may enjoy certain privileges, for example, priority for pedestrian friendly street projects i.e. widening of sidewalks.

Schools:

The Pace Car can be promoted very successfully through schools. As part of a larger program to make streets safer for kids, students sign up adults to be Pace Car Drivers. The adults are offered a Pace Car sticker to put on their car. It can also work well with high schools, where there are usually plenty of young drivers in the upper grades.

Businesses:

Business can be key partners through business improvement associations (BIAs) or individually. They may make significant contributions:

1. Mark their business vehicles as Pace Cars
2. Advertise that they are a Pace Car supporter (e.g. put sticker in front window)
3. Offer discounts to those who have signed the Pace Car pledge. It is important that the same discount is offered to anyone arriving at the store by foot, bicycle or public transport (after all those who don't own a car or chose to minimize its use should also be rewarded).
4. Help sign up new recruits by stocking brochures and stickers in their store.

To get businesses involved, explain that the Pace Car actually increases people's disposable income (because they drive more efficiently and reduce their car use). More money in people's pockets means more money can be spent at their business.

Other:

Be creative and invent some of your own ideas for getting Pace Car drivers signed up. Can you get an insurance company to offer discounts to those who have signed the Pace Car Pledge and display a sticker on their car? Be inventive!

**Adapted from: www.lesstraffic.com and www.ecologyaction.ca*

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