

**NEWS RELEASE*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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**Traffic safety key in rush back to fall routines**

Halifax – As we all scramble back to our regular routines this September, it's easy to forget safety on our streets. The Ecology Action Centre (EAC) says now, more than ever, it's important to watch out for students as they walk or cycle to school. EAC offers some innovative tools for students and drivers to travel safely.

"It's important for motorists and those walking and wheeling to school to be on high alert so everyone stays safe," says Janet Barlow, the EAC's Active & Safe Routes to School Coordinator. "It's a real pleasure and privilege to get to school under your own steam. We want to make sure it's a positive experience."

Walking or cycling to school is a healthy, wholesome childhood activity. It makes a significant dent in the amount of daily physical activity kids need. It also cuts down on greenhouse gas emissions when families leave the car at home and use their feet instead. Two Active & Safe Routes to School programs – Making Tracks and Pace Car – ensure students and motorists safely share the road.

The Making Tracks program teaches hands-on skills in the areas of pedestrian, cycling, skateboarding and in-line skating safety. Using a train-the-trainer model, it enlists the help of adults and youth in teaching safety skills to other youth and children. Making Tracks is available to schools and youth-serving organizations across the province.

The Pace Car program helps communities stop speeding on their streets. Community Pace Car teams encourage residents to sign the Pace Car pledge, who then display the official Pace Car emblems on their cars. Pace Car drivers become "mobile speed bumps," slowing the traffic behind them and calming streets. The program is available to NS schools, municipalities and community groups.

Making Tracks and Pace Car are offered through Active & Safe Routes to School with support from the NS Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, the Bicycle Trade Association of Canada, St. FX University and Canada's home, car and business insurers. Active & Safe Routes to School is coordinated by the EAC in partnership with the NS Department of Health Promotion and Protection as part of the Active Kids Healthy Kids Initiative. Learn more about Making Tracks and Pace Car at [www.saferoutesns.ca](http://www.saferoutesns.ca).

"Everyone must take responsibility for his or her own safety and learn to share the road properly," Barlow says. "That means motorists as well as pedestrians and cyclists."

A chance for families to hone their traffic safety skills is coming up during International Walk to School Month in October. Schools and groups may register for the event online at [www.saferoutesns.ca](http://www.saferoutesns.ca).

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