

# 'Frightening' number of kids not buckled up properly in blitz

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Staff Writer

Operation Impact — a nation-wide, one-day campaign targeting drivers who don't buckle up — cost 58 York Region drivers \$110 and two demerit points each.

But the really scary statistics from the blitz, held on Oct. 5, are the ones involving children and their safety seats, with the vast majority of parents still unable or unwilling to ensure the seats are properly installed.

While the sample was small, at 29

cars, a staggering 93 per cent of tether straps were misused or not used at all, while 80 per cent of the seat-belt assemblies weren't properly attached to the child seats.

"It's frightening," said Sgt. Peter Orlovski. "We had a woman stop during the blitz and ask us to show her how to properly install her seat and the child was three years old. She hadn't tethered the seat to the car at all. We couldn't believe it."

The national average of compliance lies somewhere between 30 and 60 per cent. And despite well-publicized clinics and education programs, York's average remains well below that.

"People think they can just put the seat in the back and that's it, but there are a variety of levels people need to look at — the tether straps which secure the seat, the seat-belt which

attaches in various ways, the safety seat and the restraint mechanism on the seat itself," Sgt. Orlovski explained. "I'm quite upset at these numbers."

He said the force is committed to "continuous and unrelenting" education and enforcement for parents.

Information is available through the York Region Public Health Department at 1-800-361-5653 or at any police station. As well, staff at most car dealerships are trained to install child safety seats.

### ACROSS CANADA

Operation Impact is an initiative of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police which encourages forces across the country to enforce a zero tolerance policy for drivers and passengers who don't buckle up.

Police and health department

nurses stopped cars for a seat belt count on Oct. 5 between 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. at the intersections of Yonge Street and 16th Avenue and Carrville Road and Bathurst Street.

They stopped 398 vehicles and issued 58 seat belt violations for a compliance rate of 85 per cent, compared to the national average of 90 per cent.

Approximately one-third of drivers and passengers killed in fatal collisions in Ontario last year were not wearing seat-belts.

In York Region, 22.5 per cent of all fatal accidents had lack of, or improper use of seat-belts as a contributing factor to death.

Transport Canada estimates 11,690 lives have been saved by seat-belts between 1990 and 2000.

York police will continue the campaign as October is the force's Seat-Belt Month.

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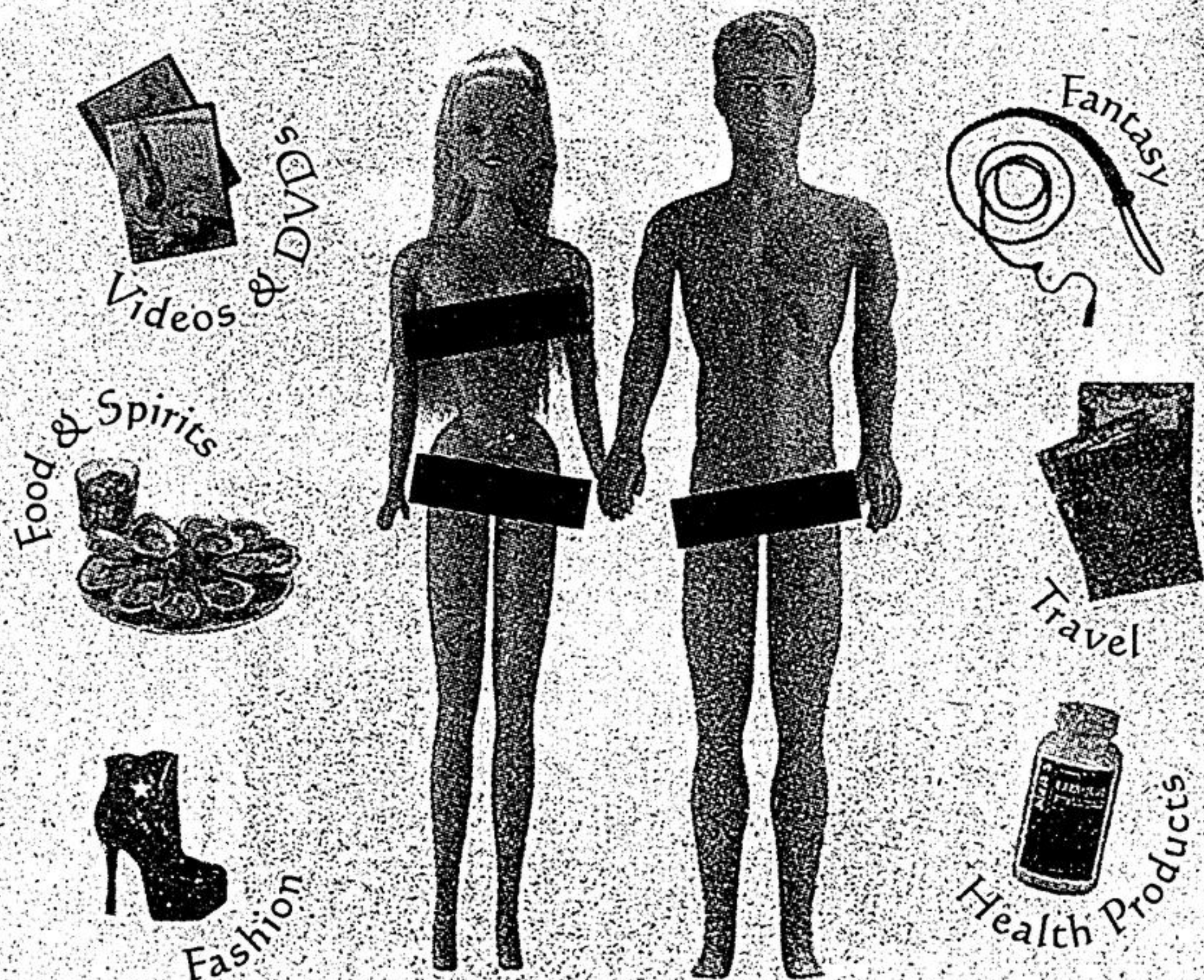
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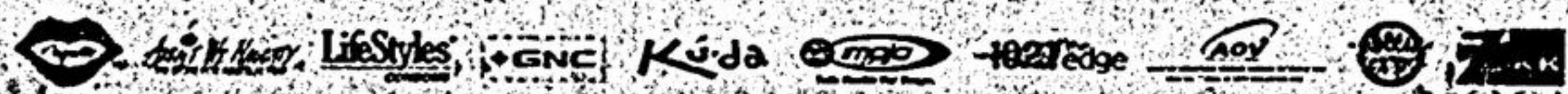


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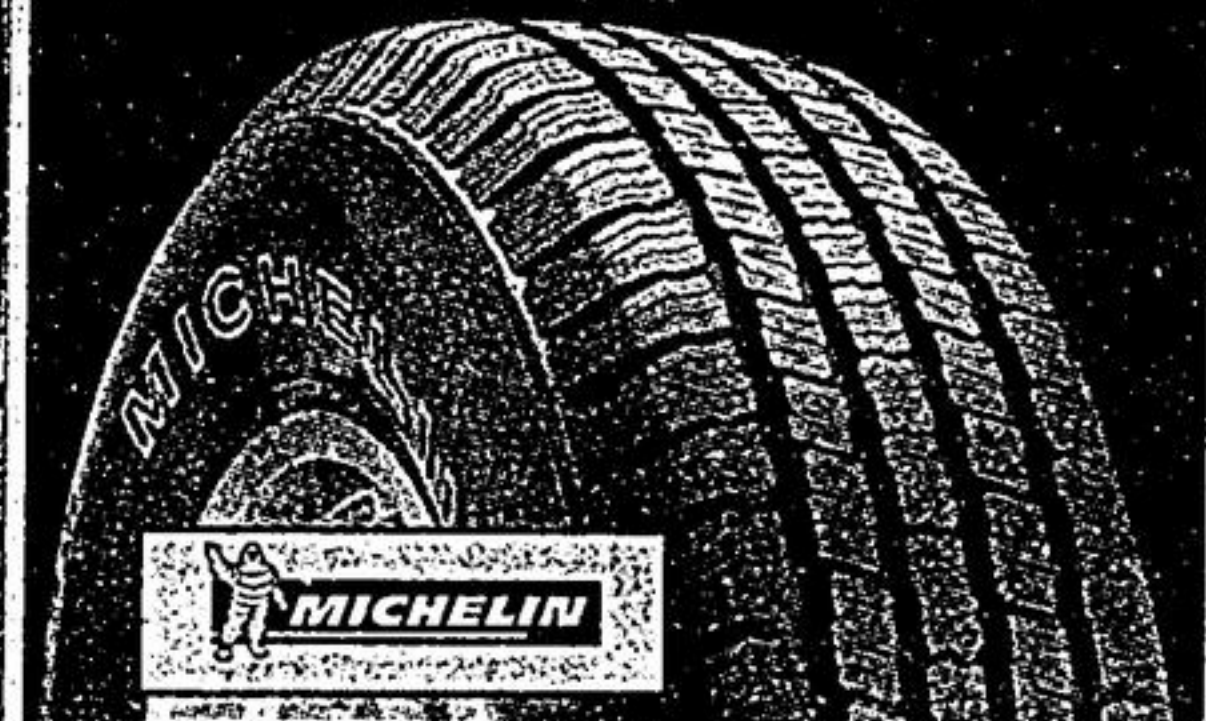


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