

Wait for the whistle before you walk; Welland crossing guards using new approach at intersections

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Welland, ON – Two weeks into the school year and the City of Welland has received several complaints regarding motorists speeding through intersections as crossing guards attempt to cross children on their way to school safely.

As an additional measure to communicate with pedestrians and motorists this year, the City equipped all crossing guards with Windsor sports whistles, designed to reach audible levels above the sound of traffic at the push of a button.

Step One – one long whistle blast:

The crossing guard determines it is safe to enter the crosswalk, alerting motorists they are stepping out into the crosswalk.

Step Two- two short whistle blasts:

Once deemed safe, the crossing guard will convey two short whistle blasts indicating pedestrians may cross the street.

“All crossing guards are wearing masks to help keep those around them safe, but in doing so, they can reduce the quality and clarity of verbal communication which we are used to relying on,” said Jolene Kostick, workplace health, safety, and wellness specialist. “We brought in the whistles to provide an additional audible control to assist the crossing guards carry out their high-risk tasks. It is the opinion of everyone involved who is actively improving the crossing guard program at the City that crossing guards have the vital task of keeping our kids and other members of the community safe when crossing our streets, and no one should feel at risk when doing so.”

School crossing guards are regulated to stop traffic movement under the authority of the Highway Traffic Act. Therefore, the City reminds motorists to obey the crossing guards' signals and exercise safe driving in all school zones and crosswalks.

Anyone who witnesses unsafe conditions is encouraged to contact the City and report the incident. Regulated by the Niagara Regional Police in terms of enforcement, the City would like to know about incidents to respond quickly and accordingly.

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