

Elmer the Safety Elephant

[Elmer's 7 Safety Rules:](#)

1. Look all ways before you cross the street
2. Never play near parked cars
3. Drive your bike safely and obey all signs and signals
4. Play games in a safe place away from traffic
5. Walk when you leave the curb, don't run
6. Where there are no sidewalks, walk on the left of the street, facing traffic
7. Always wear your seat belt in the car

For further information on Elmer please contact **Arlene at (905)625-0556 Ext 225**

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[History of the Elmer Program](#)

The Elmer Traffic Safety Program was developed in 1947. Toronto Police Sergeant Vern page created Elmer in response to community concerns over the increasing number of traffic injuries and deaths among children. Patterened after Detroit's successful Green Pennant Campaign and sponsored by the Toronto Telegram newspaper, Elmer was an immediate hit.

More importantly, the program had an immediate and dramatic effect. At the end of the first year, while vehicle registration had increase by more than 10%, traffic-related incidents among Toronto school children were reduced by 44%. And the Safety Elephant's work did not go unnoticed. Elmer's fame grew quickly, both across Ontario and throughout Canada, as news of the numbers spread.

Other Ontario communities soon began to ask for the program. Demand became so strong that the telegram, holder of the copyright, turned to the Ontario Safety League to administer the Elmer program throughout the province. As Elmer's following grew, so did the reports of results like those first

experienced in Toronto.

The Elmer Concept

Elmer's original six safety rules were developed based on results from a 1940's study of traffic-related injuries and deaths involving children aged five to nine years. The study showed that an overwhelming majority of these incidents could be traced to six specific hazards, with running and excitement as frequently contributing factors. The research showed that in order to stay safe in traffic, children need a set of safety rules as well as a way to remember them under any circumstances.

A solution for this came in the form of Elmer's Six Safety Rules. A simple rule was developed for each hazard identified by the study, and an elephant named Elmer chosen as a mascot that would reinforce the messages and symbolize the importance of memory. A seventh rule on safety belts was added in the mid - 1970's when Ontario first mandated seat belt usage. Elmer's Safety Rules are available in eight different languages and are promoted through a variety of activities and materials.

Over 65 years later, Elmer and his Safety Rules continue to impact children's safety. Elmer The Safety Elephant appearances and materials help children to never forget how to play safely.