



Chief Medical Examiner Urged to Inquire into Deaths from Pick-ups and Large SUVs

Calgary, August 12, 2026 — Continuing a cross-country campaign, a coalition of Canadian road safety groups is [today calling on the Chief Medical Examiner for Alberta](#) to investigate the growing danger to pedestrians, cyclists, and other vulnerable road users from pick-up trucks and large SUVs.

The call to action by C.R.A.S.H. ([Coalition to Reduce Auto Size Hazards](#)) comes as the province suffers from an increasing number of deaths and serious injuries on its roads. Pedestrian deaths in Calgary, for example, reached an 11-year high in 2025. The latest provincial statistics show that traffic fatalities on Alberta roads rose more than 26% between 2019 and 2023, while major injuries increased almost 18% in the same period.

A growing body of research establishes that pick-up trucks and large SUVs pose a measurably greater fatality risk than conventional cars. Evidence from [a comprehensive 2024 study in the United States](#), for example, shows that as the front-end height of pick-up trucks and SUVs grows, there is a disproportionate increase in the fatality risk to individuals walking or cycling.

C.R.A.S.H. and Alberta partners including [Youth en Route](#), [Bike Calgary](#), [Bike Edmonton](#), [Yeg Bike Coalition](#), [Bike Bus Alberta](#), and [Paths for People](#) have written to Dr. Akmal Coetzee-Khan, the Chief Medical Examiner, calling for a death review of pedestrian and cyclist fatalities involving pickups and large SUVs in Alberta.

“We get it,” said Doug Clark, President of Bike Calgary. “Pickups are popular in Alberta, including as passenger vehicles, in part due to the aggressive marketing and generous financing by auto-makers. In fact, buyers are often given few options. We also believe that the same drivers and a majority of Albertans put even greater value on the safety of their loved ones, all of whom walk on or near a street or road at some point during the day.”

“We are confident that when people know the facts, including the greater fatality risks of pickups and large SUVs, we can begin a serious conversation about a safer way forward,” said Cheryl Villetard of Paths for People. “Alberta’s Chief Medical Examiner, as a neutral expert, is well-positioned not only to investigate the facts surrounding road deaths involving pickups and large SUVs, but to put forward specific recommendations to government and industry to save lives on our roads.”

Specific design features make pickups and large SUVs more dangerous and distinguish them from cars. These vehicles often have significant driver blind spots, are much larger and heavier than sedans, and are built with a high, blunt front end. The high front end --- which is primarily a marketing feature --- changes the point of impact with pedestrians from the lower legs to the torso and head, resulting in increased fatality risk. Children and seniors are particularly vulnerable.

Pickups, largely promoted and used for personal travel, along with SUVs and minivans accounted for almost 88% of new vehicle sales in Canada in 2025.

C.R.A.S.H. is calling upon the Chief Medical Examiner to assess the greater fatality risk of pickups and large SUVs on road safety, and to make recommendations to address these dangers. The recommendations include calls that:

- the federal government require the re-design of vehicle front ends so that pickups and large SUVs are less lethal in crashes with pedestrians, cyclists, and people with disabilities, and require safety warnings about the dangers of pickups and large SUVs to accompany vehicle advertising (an effective approach to reduce cigarette smoking);
- provincial governments introduce new driver’s licence requirements to operate pickups and large SUVs, as well as a sliding scale of vehicle registration fees based on a vehicle’s danger to pedestrians and cyclists; and
- municipal governments levy parking fees based on vehicle size, and review purchasing policies for service vehicles, including pickups that are used for simple maintenance tasks in parks.

For more information on the work of C.R.A.S.H. and its recommendations, [go here](#).

For a recent *New York Times* study on the dangers of large trucks and SUVs, [go here](#).

To speak with a person associated with C.R.A.S.H, contact:

Doug Clark, President, Bike Calgary, president@bikecalgary.org

Cheryl Villetard, Vice Chair, Paths for People, cheryl@pathsforpeople.org

Albert Koehl, National Coordinator, C.R.A.S.H., crash.oversized@gmail.com tel: 647-985-3754