



" Safety is EVERYTHING!"

The history, policies, and procedures that have helped  
make Targa Newfoundland a world-class event

## INTRODUCTION

The organizers of Targa Newfoundland have a duty to design and operate the annual motorsport event as safely and responsibly as they can. Safety is the keystone of Targa Newfoundland's success and fundamental to its future. At Targa Newfoundland, **safety is everything.**

Virtually no human endeavour is without risk. With our history always close at hand, the people of Newfoundland know this better than most. That includes motorsport. And like so many other popular pursuits, the risks inherent in motorsport can be mitigated and managed so as to minimize the possibility of harm to people and property but cannot be eliminated. Yet that is our goal — to continually enhance safety to the point where risk diminishes to the point of disappearing.

The following pages outline the history of the development of safety practices and policies at Targa Newfoundland, and details the current processes and protocols which have contributed to the creation of an outstanding safety record for one of North America's most celebrated sporting events. It puts Targa Newfoundland's safety plans and record into perspective with other events, including motorsports far beyond the shores of Newfoundland. Most importantly, it sets out the philosophy behind the safety policies and practices currently in place, and which guides their continuous improvement.

This document is arguably overdue. We recognize that it is not enough to have sophisticated safety plans; we have to tell people about them. The people of the communities touched by Targa Newfoundland have a right to know what efforts are made to ensure their safety. After all, this event exists at the pleasure of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and has become a globally admired sporting event because of their support.

It is also a response to recent criticism, some of which is unfair and unfounded. Some criticism is well-meaning but lacks the facts that illuminate any discussion about Targa Newfoundland. Hopefully this document will remedy that. But some criticism has been based on nothing more than idle speculation, willful ignorance, and petty political positioning. We are always open to any discussion on further improving our systems and to contributions from knowledgeable, experienced people who can bring their special expertise to the discussion of safety. But we are not prepared to debate the important technical aspects of safety that have been developed over a dozen years of real-world experience, backed by the best practices from around the world, with people who have nothing beyond irresponsible alarmism and uneducated hysteria to contribute. Our many thousands of volunteers and supporters, fans and officials, competitors and crews, deserve better.

We hope this document helps readers understand the elaborate measures we take and investment we make to build on Targa Newfoundland's tremendous safety record. We also hope the facts here contribute to the important discussion that should happen in every community touched by Targa Newfoundland — a discussion based on facts and not on politics and hysteria.

Respectfully,



Robert Giannou  
President  
Newfoundland International Motorsports Limited

# 1. TARGA NEWFOUNDLAND'S SAFETY POLICY

## 1.1 Safety Policy Statement

Targa Newfoundland is a world-class motorsport event, operating with the approval of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, and conducted in cooperation with Newfoundland communities and the Newfoundland public.

As the owner and organizer of Targa Newfoundland, it is the expressed policy and commitment of Newfoundland International Motorsports Limited, to be implemented by its staff, that the event will be planned, organized and run in such a way as to protect the health, safety and welfare of all those who participate in or who are in any way involved with Targa. These standards are constantly reviewed, evaluated and updated with the objective of protecting the safety of:

- The residents of the communities and the public who attend the event,
- The volunteers and officials who operate the event,
- The participants and crews who compete in the event,
- The properties in the communities through which the event runs.

As part of its commitment to operate a safe and enjoyable event, Newfoundland International Motorsports undertakes to ensure that all of its officials, organizers, volunteers, and competitors are properly instructed, trained, equipped and motivated prior to their being employed, tasked or allowed to participate in any activities associated with the Targa Newfoundland motorsport competition.

## 1.2 How do we apply *safety*?

The concept of safety is well understood, but to what do we apply our safety philosophy? For Targa Newfoundland management and staff, our philosophy of safety is applied to:

- The overall planning of the route
- The design of each of the more than 40 closed road competitive Targa stages, including:
  - The potential for overall average speed and speed in individual sections of road
  - The number and severity of bends and corners
  - The condition of the road and its surface
  - The plans by which the stages, including the areas immediately before and after each stage, are made secure including identifying and securing areas deemed potentially hazardous to spectators
  - The level of detail in the route books supplied to competitors, including the number of instructions and warnings that make them aware of difficult or challenging sections
  - The proximity of the stage to homes, businesses and other structures
  - The requirement that each of the stages be fully controlled, from start to finish, by trained radio operators
- The training of the event officials charged with running each of the stages
- The training of every volunteer marshal who plays a role in the operation of the stage; including basic safety measures, crowd control and spectator assistance methodology.

- The provision of professional ambulance and paramedic crews for every stage
- Detailed plans by which the competition is halted so ambulance, fire and other professional first-responders can access the community in response to incidents involving the community or the competitors
- Enforcing minimum standards of skill and experience via licensing for all competitors, including the ability of the organizer to require medical declarations of fitness for competitors where required
- Compulsory safety briefings for all competitors
- The requirement for all competitors to possess first aid skills
- Rigid rules involving competitor behaviour and the requirement for all competitors to sign a code of conduct and safety
- Minimum safety and roadworthiness standards for competing vehicles
- Compulsory breathalyzer testing of each competitor each day prior to the start of competition; a *zero tolerance* policy for the use of drugs or alcohol by competitors and officials during the competition
- Regular consultation with community leaders and the appropriate police forces
- Code of conduct for event officials who are required to drive on public roads in the course of their duties
- The creation and maintenance of a trained incident response and investigation team responsible for analysis of all incidents regardless of whether they resulted in injury or damage
- The collection and analysis of detailed information from each incident so that findings can guide the design of the course, route instructions, competitor licensing and other factors
- Ongoing public education programs to promote safe practices for spectators at Targa Newfoundland

## 2. SAFETY FROM THE START

### 2.1 Targa Tasmania

Targa Newfoundland had a decade of safety experience to draw on before it even started.

Targa Newfoundland is a long-distance automobile rally for historic, classic and modern sporting cars modeled on the successful Targa Tasmania event in Australia. When Targa Newfoundland was established in 2001, organizers purchased from Tasmania the material and plans for the safe operation of that event, and contracted for consulting services from senior Tasmanian officials who came to Newfoundland to analyze the prospective route from a safety and operations perspective.

***FACT: Targa Newfoundland's initial safety policies and procedures were based on a decade of experience in Australia.***

### 2.2 North American expertise

From its inception, Targa Newfoundland retained the services of the top North American professional rally organizers. Working with the experts from Australia, the team set the initial course for Targa Newfoundland. During the first two years of Targa Newfoundland, the safety plans from Tasmania were reviewed and revised to meet the particular demands of Newfoundland roads.

***FACT: Safety policies and procedures were reviewed and revised by North American experts based on local conditions***

### **2.3 Training local officials began immediately**

Extensive community and volunteer training programs used in Targa Tasmania were the starting point for local training of volunteers. With little motorsport background in Newfoundland communities, the programs were revised to “start from scratch” to bring local volunteers up to a high level of proficiency. Training community volunteers in the safe, efficient operation of competitive Targa stages was priority. In the first years, more than 100 officials and more than 2,000 volunteers from 60 communities were trained annually by these programs.

***FACT: Targa Newfoundland has been training officials and volunteers since 2002***

### **2.4 Community involvement and pride**

As community training progressed, it was quickly apparent that a great deal of pride and enthusiasm was building for the event and participation in it by the volunteers. Volunteers were proud of their training and the role they played in bringing a safe, world-class event to their home communities.

***FACT: The corps of trained volunteers is proud of its participation in Targa Newfoundland and role in bringing a safe event to the communities***

## **3. THE EVOLUTION OF SAFETY**

### **3.1 International resources**

As it became more successful and internationally recognized, Targa Newfoundland attracted experienced officials from the U.S., Britain, and the Caribbean, as well as Canada. The focus of these experienced motorsports officials was to identify, train, and develop local people who could shoulder the task of operating the event safely. Their collective experience and their work with the event pointed them to further evolution of the safety training to respond to the challenge of running through communities with varying densities of population.

***FACT: Recognition of the unique Newfoundland conditions was an early factor in the evolution of Targa Newfoundland’s safety policies and procedures***

### **3.2 Beginning the ‘Culture of Safety’**

In the third year, an effort was made to recruit volunteers who were already trained in the importance of safety as part of their profession. A corps of skilled and disciplined people was identified in Gander where many were involved in the air transportation sector – particularly within Nav Canada, the federal agency that controls air traffic over the north western Atlantic Ocean. Others were found within the military or ex-military community. Already steeped in a corporate culture of safety, these volunteers quickly understood and embraced the need for the continual evolution of Targa Newfoundland’s safety policies and practices. Many quickly rose through the organizational ranks despite not having extensive motorsports experience.

***FACT: Targa Newfoundland has recruited skilled volunteers with safety experience outside of motorsport***

### **3.3 Bringing competitors into the safety culture**

Early analysis of incidents at Targa Newfoundland events identified an opportunity to improve safety at the most basic level – with the competitors. In particular, the analysis pointed to the importance of communication between the driver and navigator in the car. This was especially important for novice teams with no prior experience in Newfoundland. Lacking a suitable commercially available school, it fell to Targa Newfoundland to create a school for competitors that would provide the necessary background and important emphasis on driver/co-driver communication. Top driving instructors from Canada and the US contributed to the design of the driving portion of the school, while some of North America’s best navigators created curriculum for that training. The communication section was extracted from manuals used by commercial airlines. The school is mandatory for new Targa competitors. It is now offered in both Ontario and Newfoundland, and has processed more than 280 graduates in seven years.

***FACT: A school to train new competitors in the unique challenges of Targa Newfoundland was created with the help of top drivers and navigators, and with material from the airline industry.***

### **3.4 Role of the offshore oil industry**

After the offshore helicopter crash in 2009, Targa Newfoundland approached some of the offshore oil production and operating companies and was able to attract the services of one of the consultants who had developed some of their safety policies. The consultant was asked to review the event’s existing safety policies and, if necessary, recommend changes. After a comprehensive review, it was recommended that the incident prevention procedures remain unchanged, but that the incident response procedures be rewritten. The incident response manuals were subsequently created along with a new Incident Response Department to manage them.

***FACT: An independent consultant from the offshore oil industry reviewed Targa Newfoundland safety policies and procedures which contributed to an improved incident response protocol.***

### **3.5 Revised event operations**

With the creation of the Incident Response Department, the operation of the event was divided into two sections: The first section was dedicated to running the event in a safe and timely manner, while the second section was dedicated to responding to any incidents. This decision would allow the Event Operations group to run the event on an exact schedule while the Incident Response group would look after an incident.

***FACT: Targa Newfoundland management includes a separate, senior group with direct responsibility for responding to any incident.***

## **4. SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT TRAINING PROGRAMS TODAY**

From its start in 2002, Targa Newfoundland has continued to evolve its understanding of safety and the policies and practices that have resulted in an outstanding safety record.

### **4.1 Annual accreditation of officials**

The cornerstone training program of Targa Newfoundland is the annual six-week officials’ accreditation seminar. This seminar is run each spring and consists of seven training modules based on stage operations, the culture of safety and the zero incident tolerance. The seminar provides three year accreditation for those officials who successfully obtain 90% in the

accreditation exam. All Targa Newfoundland management and operations officials must be accredited to work on a competitive Targa stage. Now in its fifth year, the program has graduated 90 volunteer officials.

**FACT: All Targa Newfoundland management and officials must be accredited to work on a Targa stage regardless of their assignment.**

#### **4.2 Annual operations and safety training program for officials**

Each year, Targa Newfoundland officials are put through a two day operations and safety training program, which includes training on equipment operations, methods, and procedures for running a stage. The safety operations program, in the 12 years it has existed, has trained more than 450 individuals.

**FACT: All Targa Newfoundland officials complete a two-day operations and safety training program every year.**

#### **4.3 Community feedback**

Targa Newfoundland annually holds community and volunteer feedback and training sessions where all of the communities that participate in the event are invited to meet with the event's senior management, share experiences and work together to improve the event. At the session, the day is split into two sections, one dealing with the previous year and the other working to establishing a culture of safety and a zero tolerance incidents plan. Two or three of these seminars are run in various areas to make it easier for the communities to attend. The feedback program, in the 12 years, has involved approximately 960 individuals.

**FACT: Participating Targa Newfoundland communities contribute to an annual post-event feedback and training event.**

#### **4.4 Annual community meetings**

Pre- and post-event meetings are held each year with communities that host Targa stages. In most cases, the first takes place after the event and a second in the spring before the coming event. These meetings involve municipal mayors and councilors, concerned citizens and key volunteers from the community. Approximately 70 meetings are held annually with the object of improving community safety, organization and event timing. An average of 10 people attended each of these meetings.

**FACT: Every community that hosts a Targa stage annually participates in two meetings with event management to discuss safety, planning and organization.**

#### **4.5 Annual safety marshals training program**

Each year the safety marshals from each community are trained (or re-trained), often in multiple sessions. In addition, *train-the-trainer* programs have been instituted so that safety marshals can be trained by local community officials. In the 12 years of Targa Newfoundland, it is estimated that an average of 30 of these three-hour evening safety and spectator management seminars have been run each year, with an average of 35 attendees per event.

**FACT: In 12 years, the safety marshal program has trained approximately 12,600 volunteers.**

## **5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND INSURANCE**

It is not enough that Targa Newfoundland set and maintain its own standards for safety. By agreeing to insure the event for all manner of liability, Targa Newfoundland's insurance company effectively acts as overseer and final arbiter of safety standards. The insurer demands Targa Newfoundland meet very high standards *and then bets heavily that we perform to those standards.*

### **5.1 Event insurance**

Targa Newfoundland carries an extensive insurance policy which provides public liability coverage for the participants in the event, the officials and workers who run the event, and the general public in the areas where the event is run. It provides extensive property damage coverage for the properties and facilities in communities through which the event runs. At their request, municipalities are named in the statement of coverage. This insurance provides coverage for liability and damages up to \$5,000,000 on any one incident. The insurance is placed through a brokerage firm that deals exclusively with motorsports properties, and handles some of the largest motorsports events in the world. The policy is underwritten by a respected global insurance company, Lloyds of London.

Since its inception, Targa Newfoundland has made it a policy to share with its insurers all decisions pertaining to the organization, set-up and running of the event. This level of transparency has created a very deep relationship wherein the insurance company, which assumes the final risk, actually participates in all phases of the event safety planning.

**FACT: Targa Newfoundland's insurance company participates in every event, sending staff to attend the event and to work with Targa Newfoundland senior managers in auditing the design, set-up and running of the event on a stage by stage basis.**

## **6. STAGE SAFETY DESIGN**

### **6.1 Stage planning process**

Stages are planned to be geographical groups with eight to nine stages in the same area. The communities involved with the stages are then approached and a proposal for the stage discussed with the leaders and/or the community. Once a potential stage is identified, a rough concept plan and time line is developed. When the concept is completed, the potential stage is reviewed for safety and emergency response issues.

**FACT: The safety of any stage is a consideration early in the planning process.**

### **6.2 Stage design process**

When a stage is proposed, the roads are examined for safety, potential speeds and how they contribute to the competitive make-up of the event. A stage plan is then prepared identifying all of the features of the stage including houses, their proximity to the road, corners, sight-lines and potential challenges. Once this is done, a *go/no-go* decision is made on the stage. If a *go* decision is made, the stage is mapped in detail and a safety plan developed which will set out details such as number of safety marshals required, where traffic control and other access points

are to be taped, and in what colour. Barrier locations and safe spectator areas are also identified. When the final design is approved, the plan is reviewed by the community and the stage operations team and then placed in a manual for set-up.

When the design is complete, it is reviewed again for road surface issues, pot-holes and other problems and these issues are transmitted to the appropriate highway maintenance officials for repair.

**FACT: Detailed maps of every single Targa stage are prepared and a safety plan is developed that includes marshal requirements, the placement of barriers and spectator points, and taping plans.**

### **6.3 Stage set-up process**

The safety plan is given to the community volunteers who review it and put in place a local set-up plan. On the nights before the stage is scheduled, the warning tape is put in place and teams arrange for barriers. Three hours before the start of the stage it is rigged as per the plan, under the supervision of a Targa Newfoundland Set-Up Vehicle, which works with the local volunteers to ensure the plan is followed precisely. At 30 minutes before the start of the stage, the Set-Up Vehicle will make a final pass of the stage checking for compliance. The stage is scheduled to be full rigged and ready for road close 20 minutes before the scheduled start time.

**FACT: Teams of local volunteers set up the stage according to a detailed set-up and safety plan, supervised by a Targa Newfoundland Set-Up Vehicle.**

### **6.4 Stage safety audit process**

The stage safety audit team (three vehicles) then moves onto the stage. They follow the same procedure with every stage:

- a) The first vehicle to enter the stage is *Road Close*, which ensures the taping plan is followed and checks to make sure any spectators are in safe places out of harm's way. Any issues with spectators are reported and corrected on the spot.
- b) Approximately 8 minutes before the start, the second *Course Check Vehicle* drives the entire length of the stage to check spectators and ensure that any reported issues are dealt with.
- c) The final vehicle, the *Course Safety Vehicle*, enters the stage to do a comprehensive recheck of the entire stage set-up. It is only when this process is complete to the satisfaction of the team is the stage permitted to start.

**FACT: A safety audit team comprised of trained officials in three vehicles reviews every stage to ensure compliance with the set-up and safety plan, and to deal with any issues on the spot.**

## **7. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

As one of three recognized international Targa-style motorsport events in the world, Targa Newfoundland shares its experiences and best practices with other major events in both formal and informal exchanges.

### **7.1 Information exchange**

An informal exchange exists with organizers in Australia (Tasmania) and New Zealand on issues of rules, standards, and policies. Targa Newfoundland reviews aspects such as safety

standards for vehicles, helmets, seat belts and other safety equipment from these events and other motorsport competitions in Canada and the U.S. to ensure we are aligned with best practices from these events and organizers. In some cases, rules or policies from other events that improve safety have been adopted and adapted for use in Targa Newfoundland.

Where possible, information is also exchanged on major incidents involving spectators or other non-competitors in an effort to ensure the lessons from an incident in one corner of the world are applied elsewhere.

Through these relationships, we have determined that the safety record of Targa Newfoundland is equal to or better than those of other highly regarded, professionally administered Targa-style motorsport events.

***FACT: An information exchange with Targa Tasmania resulted in a rule change in Targa Newfoundland designed to slow cars' cornering speeds and reduce the likelihood of their damaging roads.***

## **8. PUBLIC EDUCATION: “CULTURE OF SAFETY”**

In 2012, Targa Newfoundland launched a comprehensive public education program to help spectators to enjoy the competition safely. The safety message, captured in six easy-to-remember points, is reinforced on posters and road closure signs, in newsletters, the free spectator programs and in advertising ahead of the start of the rally. The reminder is part of Targa Newfoundland's “culture of safety” to spread the word.

The campaign reminds fans:

- **Be a smart spectator.**
- Stand at least 10 metres from the road
- Choose high ground
- Never stand on the outside of a turn
- Never stand behind red tape
- Always stand – Never sit down to watch
- Counsel others!
- **Think Safety!**

## **9. THE RESULT**

The cumulative result of this massive safety program is that, from the event's start in 2002 up to and including 2013, Targa Newfoundland has run 12 successful events. In that period of time:

- Participating vehicles have driven over 7,500,000 kilometers of Newfoundland roads
- Competing vehicles driven 360,000 kilometers of closed road competitive stages
- Stages have been hosted by, and run in, 76 different communities
- These 76 communities have hosted 505 stages

In all of this time and distance:

- There has been only one incident resulting in a civilian injury
- There have been four insurance claims for property damage