
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2015JAG0026-000165
February 11, 2015

Ministry of Justice
BC Coroners Service

BC Coroners Service releases report on youth driver deaths

VICTORIA – The BC Coroners Service has released the report and recommendations of a Death Review Panel into the deaths of young motor vehicle drivers in British Columbia.

The panel, composed of experts from across the spectrum of both child-serving and road safety agencies, made three Recommendations, aimed at: reviewing the Graduated Licensing Program for new drivers to see if its effectiveness can be enhanced; increasing knowledge about fatal MVIs involving young drivers through enhanced data collection by the BC Coroners Service itself and by the Insurance Corporation of BC (ICBC); and reducing speed-related injuries and deaths.

Chief coroner Lisa Lapointe thanked the panel members for their commitment to the death review process and the prevention of child and youth deaths. “The Honourable Ted Hughes in his 2006 report stressed the need for external, multi-disciplinary reviews of child deaths, and we believe these panels are addressing that goal admirably.”

The panel reviewed in aggregate the circumstances of 106 youth drivers who died in motor vehicle incidents between 2004 and 2013. Data reviewed showed that the young drivers who died were primarily male youth who were 17 and 18 years old. The panel’s review showed that speed, impairment, lack of seatbelt use and inexperience were common contributing factors.

Panel chair Michael Egilson noted that the introduction of the Graduated Licensing Program in 1998 has led to a significant reduction in the number of young drivers dying. However, motor vehicle incidents remain the leading cause of death for youth aged 15 to 18 years in B.C.

Egilson stresses the importance of involving youth themselves and also their parents and guardians in the development of solutions to reduce the death toll further.

The full text of the report can be found at:

<http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/coroners/reports/docs/young-drivers-deaths.pdf>

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BACKGROUND

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Text of Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1:

By December 2017:

- That ICBC complete a review of BC's Graduated Licencing Program (Class 7 & 8). The review should focus on three areas:
- A review of GLP and the higher risk Novice licence stage to determine if there are opportunities for improving the crash reduction benefits of the program, including a review of research-based new driver best practices from other jurisdictions.

A review of how parents and guardians are engaged in the process of supporting young drivers. ICBC currently has a variety of educational materials and a family contract to help guide parents and guardians in supporting young drivers learn competent and safe driving practices. Specifically, the review would focus on:

- o Identification of the current approaches used to engage parents;
- o Determining the effectiveness of these approaches; and
- o Identifying any gaps within these approaches and addressing them.

Engage young drivers and soon- to-be drivers in a dialogue about the strengths of the GLP and how it could further support the learning and implementation of safe driving skills and practices, including the input of young people on how to reduce fatal crashes, reduce speeding, and ensure compliance with GLP restrictions.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

By February 2016:

The BC Coroners Service contribute to the knowledge base of young driver behaviour and road safety by obtaining and reviewing driver abstracts in all BCCS investigations of young driver fatal crashes.

ICBC and its partner agencies contribute to the knowledge base of distracted driving of young drivers by:

- o Reviewing and clarifying the criteria used by law enforcement to identify distracted driving in police-attended crashes; and
- o Publicly reporting on distracted driving.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

By February 2016:

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure consult with road safety, injury prevention and public health agencies to ensure that road safety and injury prevention are the paramount criteria used in the course of monitoring and reviewing existing speed limits and setting new speed limits on BC provincial road system.

The Ministry of Justice review the requirements for conducting a pilot project of automated speed enforcement measures, such as “time and distance” and/or “speed on green”, in areas identified as high risk for crashes including those involving young drivers.

By February 2017

The Ministry of Justice develops and implements a pilot automated speed enforcement project that would be:

- o For a specified period of time;
- o Located at a limited number of sites identified as having a high prevalence of speed related crashes; and
- o Evaluated to monitor whether these specific automated speed enforcement measures result in a reduction in the number and severity of crashes.

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