



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2014JAG0320-001747
November 19, 2014

Ministry of Justice
BC Coroners Service

Pedestrian safety highlighted

VICTORIA – A new review from the BC Coroners Service shows risks to pedestrians and other vulnerable road users remain high on B.C.'s roads even as risks to occupants of motor vehicles continue to decline.

The BC Coroners' data shows that between 2008 and 2012, the number of vehicle drivers and passengers who died in motor vehicle incidents dropped by more than one third.

But the number of pedestrians killed remained constant over that five-year period at about 55 each year.

The BC Coroners Service released the new figures to mark the National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims.

"Every road crash death is a tragedy," said Chief Coroner Lisa Lapointe, "Especially as so many of these incidents are preventable. This year we want to focus on pedestrians because our research shows this is an area in which a great deal of prevention work still needs to be done."

The BC Coroners Service undertook a detailed analysis of 142 pedestrian deaths that occurred in B.C. from 2010 through 2012.

The analysis found that almost half the fatal incidents took place at intersections, and in more than half of those cases the pedestrian either had the right of way or was waiting on a sidewalk or median. In about 70% of those cases where the pedestrian had the right of way in crossing the road, the vehicle driver was making a left turn, which research shows is one of the most complex manoeuvres for a driver to tackle, increasing their chances of not seeing a pedestrian until it is too late to avoid them.

BC Coroners' investigations showed contributing factors in these cases involved behaviours of both the pedestrians and the drivers, and also problems with the environment, particularly areas of poor visibility. The three most common factors cited by coroners were: pedestrians wearing dark clothing which made them difficult to see; the driver was distracted or otherwise failed to see the pedestrian in time; or light conditions were poor.

And though few older pedestrians were impaired at the time of the incident, more than half of those under the age of 60 were found to have been using alcohol or drugs.

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