



July 10, 2015  
Ref: 510821

Mr. Sam MacLeod, Superintendent of Motor Vehicles  
4A 940 Blanshard Street  
PO Box 9254 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9J2

Dear Mr. MacLeod:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input to your consultation on distracted driving in BC.

The rapid increase in portable digital technologies in the past two decades has caused distracted driving to quickly emerge as one of BC's top three most serious and prevalent contributing factors to casualty crashes. The rapid advancement of mobile technologies presents increasing challenges for police in their efforts to effectively reduce and eliminate this dangerous driving behaviour.

Traffic police in BC have expressed frustration in trying to curb distracted driving through traditional methods of enforcement. Since BC's *Motor Vehicle Act* was amended in 2010 to specifically include distracted driving provisions, police have issued an increasing number of distracted driving violation tickets, without seeing an appreciable impact in reducing the behaviour or the harm caused by distracted driving.

Police do have the option of issuing violation tickets for 'driving without due care' under the *Motor Vehicle Act*, which captures a broad range of distracted driving behaviours that are not included in the specific legislation related to hand-held electronic devices. However, use of this sanction does not identify the type of distraction therefore making it impossible to identify and track the prevalence of and reductions attributed to a specific type of distracted driving behaviour.

Specifically, input from BC traffic officers and road safety professionals on the topic of distracted driving include support for:

- A clearer and more encompassing definition of what constitutes an electronic device to capture emerging technologies, including body-worn technology and in-vehicle telematics;

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- Identifying non-electronic communications device driver distractions (i.e. personal grooming; eating; unrestrained animals in the front seats);
- Amending BC's *Motor Vehicle Act* to include the requirement for all drivers to have 'one hand on the steering wheel at all times' as in other provincial jurisdictions; and
- Escalating fines and penalties, including licence suspensions and vehicle impoundment for repeat offenders, similar to the approach taken in BC with impaired driving through Immediate Roadside Prohibitions.

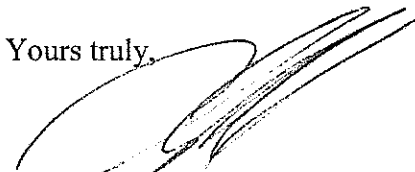
Additionally, strengthened partnerships with telecommunications firms, mobile applications developers, the automotive industry, broadcasters and road safety victims' advocates to enhance public awareness messaging about distracted driving have been suggested as a means of bringing new resources and approaches to the public awareness/education discussion on distracted driving. Many drivers, especially those who make extensive use of their vehicles for work, tell police directly that distracted driving violation tickets are not a deterrent, but simply 'the cost of doing business'.

We are not yet seeing a significant turn-around in driver behaviour, despite the addition of penalty points for all electronic devices and increasing numbers of violation tickets. As a result, policy makers and legislators may need to consider timely changes to better address this persistent road safety issue.

BC's successful approach to reducing impaired driving has demonstrated that innovative measures such as more effective policing tools, combined with immediate and escalating sanctions, can reduce predictable and preventable road deaths and injuries. Similar approaches have now been adopted for distracted driving in Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia.

Given the human and financial costs to British Columbians caused by distracted driving and driver inattention, these suggestions along with the input of the public and other road safety stakeholders, will help contribute to making BC's roads the safest in North America.

Yours truly,



Clayton J.D. Pecknold  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
and Director of Police Services  
Policing and Security Branch