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Check Against Delivery

- Thank you all for joining us.
- We're here today to double the strength of a proven, life-saving, crime-stopping tool for our police...
- One that's all about public safety.
- I'm very proud of how the Air 1 traffic safety helicopter has been shared by 17 independent police departments and RCMP detachments since 2006.
- At that time, as now, our priority was to make B.C.'s roads safer.
- The fact is, more British Columbians die in vehicle crashes than as the result of all violent crimes combined.
- Our very important partners – ICBC and police – came on board with one goal:
- To reduce this carnage by giving police another tool to track dangerous drivers.
- Air 1 has achieved this mission...
- Contributing to the lowest number of road deaths in six years, as we announced earlier this week.
- But it has accomplished much more.
- It has shown that integrating police resources makes sense.
- It is proof that police across the Lower Mainland can work together to co-ordinate a dragnet around criminals.
- Intelligence-led policing is logical: if something works, do more of it.
- And Air 1 works.

- Today, I am pleased to introduce the newest addition to our crime-fighting fleet: Air 2.
- Like Air 1, this Eurocopter Colibri is equipped with specialized technology – including high-powered lights and infra-red cameras for tracking suspects at night.
- This model was selected because it offers exceptional efficiency and range.
- It's also the quietest of its kind.
- As with Air 1, the police officers on Air 2 are trained to track suspects who are out of view of police on the ground.
- It's almost impossible to outrun a helicopter.
- One motorcyclist tried it, travelling at speeds estimated at 280 kilometres an hour.
- But even a maniac has to slow down at a T-intersection. A helicopter doesn't.
- From the air, officers can advise their counterparts on the ground about where to deploy spike belts, or how to box-in culprits.
- When these helicopters are in pursuit, police in cruisers can back off and take their direction from their eyes in the sky.
- Even if suspects try to evade arrest by heading into bush or across a field at night, the helicopter can hover overhead.
- With a high-powered light, the air crew can literally guide police to their quarry.
- In one incident, a suspect fled to a field and tried to escape on a tractor.
- Suspects have also tried to hide – in swamps and dump trucks; under a patio; down ravines and, on one memorable occasion, in a dumpster.
- None succeeded.
- Air One's statistics show clear, direct public safety benefits.
- Most importantly, since Air One took flight in July 2006, not one civilian or officer has been killed or injured in a high-speed pursuit involving the chopper.
- Along the way, it's controlled or contributed to countless successes:
- 66 high-speed pursuits ended and 79 arrested.
- 156 occupied, stolen vehicles intercepted and 233 car theft arrests.

- 54 impaired drivers and 114 aggressive drivers stopped in their tracks, resulting in tickets and charges for numerous offences, including weapons possession.
- 23 street races observed, resulting in numerous vehicle impounds, violation tickets and other charges.
- And a whopping 795 arrests for other serious offences like robbery and assault...
- Not to mention disrupting gang brawls and locating people trying to cross our border with the U.S. illegally.
- But public safety and Air One are about more than stopping dangerous and reckless behaviour.
- It has aided search-and-rescue operations, disrupted and foiled abductions and, on more than one occasion, spotted fires.
- It has even helped officers on the ground to save the life of a man intent on committing suicide by leaping from the Knight Street Bridge.
- With the ability to travel great distances safely at high speed, hover and illuminate, Air 1 and now Air 2 clearly provide valuable support to police.
- As agents of integration, Air 1 and Air 2 can pull together and empower officers from 17 detachments and departments across Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley.
- Air 1 and Air 2 can also be used in our ongoing and increasing efforts to disrupt and dismantle gang activity.
- This kind of technology-backed intelligence and unity will give police a major advantage in more situations than ever.
- And that's the way it should be.
- Thank you very much.