



Speaking Points for

The Honourable Kash Heed Solicitor General

Date: Wednesday, October 21, 2009

**Event: Restrictions On Cell Phones Announcement
Legislature, Victoria**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

- Good afternoon....
- Thank you all for coming today, and I would especially like to thank Clayton Pecknold, the vice president of the B.C. Association of Chiefs of Police....and Dr. Brian Brodie, the president of the BC Medical Association, for being here today....along with representatives from the RCMP and municipal police, the BC Automobile Association Traffic Safety Foundation, the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities, ICBC and the Insurance Bureau of Canada,
- We are all here today because distracted driving is an issue that has generated an enormous amount of public concern and debate – and for good reason.
- Frankly it is frightening to witness - and *devastating* when a life is changed forever by serious injury or worse - lost - because of inattention to the road.
- I have seen the results firsthand and what makes it even more painful is that it is preventable.
- Almost 117 people die each year in B.C. and 1400 are sent to hospital because someone was not paying attention behind the wheel.
- That is why this past July, we asked the public for their views on distracted driving and what government should do about it.
- The feedback government received from the public and organizations showed there is no doubt they also feel it is a very serious issue.
- Therefore, I'm announcing today the most comprehensive legislation in the country that tackles the problem of distracted driving.
- Starting January 1st, the hand-held use of cell phones and other electronic devices will not be permitted on the roads of British Columbia.
- In other words, with these changes, you cannot talk, type, or dial on any hand-held device while driving.
- In addition, there are more restrictions for young drivers.

- We know from our own research that they are twice as likely to be killed or injured in motor vehicle crashes because of their inexperience behind the wheel.
- As well, their use of electronic devices is significantly higher than the average person, and that combined with their inexperience, makes this group even more vulnerable.
- So, in order to ensure their safety, drivers in the Graduated Licensing Program will be restricted from using hands-free devices as well.
- We are making these changes to ensure we have the proper laws in place and the tools police need to make sure that drivers are paying attention at all times or they will face the consequences.
- Fines will begin on Feb 1 and will be \$167 for using a hand held device. Those caught texting will face an additional three points and graduated licenced drivers will automatically receive three points for any infraction.
- The only exemptions will be for police, fire and ambulance personnel and for drivers who need to call 9-1-1.
- In addition to the new law, we are also focussing on public education.
- We will be launching an extensive awareness campaign to educate drivers on the importance of paying attention to the road, because no task while driving can be anywhere near as important as everyone getting home safe.
- Thank you.