



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Impaired Driving Is A Crime - CALL 911 It's Your Community. It's Your Call.**

**Nanaimo, BC / June 19, 2009** – Impaired driving is the number one cause of criminal death in Canada. Calling 911 to report a suspected impaired driver to police helps reduce the number of impaired driving related deaths and injuries on B.C.'s streets and highways.

The Nanaimo RCMP, Office of the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles, MADD Canada, the City of Nanaimo and the BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation are working together to encourage the public to call 911 to report suspected impaired drivers in a pilot project being launched in Nanaimo.

"The public is encouraged to use 911 to report crimes," says Supt Norm Gaumont, Officer in Charge of Traffic for BC. "Driving a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is a criminal driving behaviour."

There is a perception among the public that reporting a suspected impaired driver is not a reason to call 911. In fact impaired driving is a criminal act and suspected impaired drivers can be reported to the police. 911 call centres will take and process calls reporting suspected impaired drivers.

The City of Nanaimo has installed new street and highway signs that tell drivers to pull over and call 911 to report a vehicle being driven dangerously.

"Calling 911 to report a suspected impaired driver is a critical way to assist police in keeping our roads safe. Every emergency call could save a life or prevent an injury," says Margaret Miller, MADD Canada's National President. "Call 911 programs are a vital way to engage the public and MADD Canada is proud to be part of this collaborative effort to stop impaired driving."

In a recent survey, eighty percent of British Columbians said they are more concerned about impaired driving than about any other problem facing society. Yet, the same survey reported that one in five admitted to driving after drinking.

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“(This initiative) is a demonstration of collaboration at its best – provincial and local government, police, private companies and non-profit agencies, working together to reach our mutual goal of getting impaired drivers off the road” says Steve Martin, Superintendent of Motor Vehicles.

“With the onset of warmer weather we are entering the season of increased social activity. A majority of impaired drivers are coming from private functions involving friends, family or colleagues,” says BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation Executive Director Allan Lamb. “Summertime sees the highest number of incidents of people driving while impaired. Allowing someone to leave your company who may be impaired should not be an option.”

In B.C., impaired drivers kill on average two people and injure over sixty every week, and Transport Canada statistics show impaired drivers cost the B.C. economy approximately \$1.6 billion per year, not including the cost of police, ambulance or courts.

“Deaths and injuries caused by impaired drivers are not accidents, they are the result of negligent behaviour,” adds Lamb who hopes to see full public participation in this proactive initiative.

Many impaired drivers attempt to dodge police road checks, but with accurate information provided to the 911 call centre, police can intercept a suspected driver anywhere.

If you see a car being driven dangerously, pull over safely, call 911 and be prepared to provide the license plate number, description of the vehicle, and the location and direction the vehicle is traveling in.

Impaired driving changes lives forever. Call 911 - It's your community, it's your call.

***DRIVE TO SAVE LIVES***  
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