

## **Road Users Should Beware of Drug Impaired Drivers**

**(Burnaby, B.C.)** – BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation’s executive director Allan Lamb, wants British Columbians to know that drivers impaired by drugs are a danger to all road users.

The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA) released their *Alcohol and Drug Use Among Drivers: British Columbia Roadside Survey* for 2008. The survey showed fewer people driving after drinking, but more doing so after taking drugs.

Lamb is particularly concerned that young drivers who act responsibly when it comes to combining alcohol and driving, have no idea that they could become too impaired to drive after smoking cannabis, using coke or taking their drug of choice.

“Aside from the disbelief about impairment by drug use, there are drivers out there who don’t think that the police can detect this kind of impairment, or that the police can even do anything about it. Well, they are wrong,” states Lamb.

In fact there are currently over 1,700 police officers in B.C. trained to recognize drug impairment in drivers.

Canadian police who suspect a driver of being impaired by any drug, illegal, prescription or over-the-counter, can now demand the subject submit to a breathalyzer test, physical coordination tests and an assessment by a Drug Recognition Expert using the Drug Evaluation and Classification (DEC) assessment along with a demand of bodily fluid samples (blood, saliva or urine).

Penalties for drug impaired drivers include a fine of not less than \$1,000 for the first offence, and imprisonment for the second offence of not less than 30 days and not less than 120 days for each subsequent offence. Anyone convicted of operating a vehicle under the influence of drugs, alcohol or both will be prohibited from driving a vehicle for one to three years for the first offence and two to five years for the second offence.

According to Terry Smith, chief coroner for B.C. statistics are indicating an increased presence of more than one drug in the system of drivers killed in fatal motor vehicle crashes. “Among drivers, taking more than one drug at a time may actually be as common as single-drug use is,” says Smith.

“I would really hate to see drivers on our roads exchange one form of impairment for another. Responsibility is really the issue and putting the lives of other road users at risk is simply irresponsible,” says Lamb.

## **About BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation**

The BCAA Traffic Safety Foundation is a non-profit registered charity working with families, communities and business partners to reduce the number and severity of traffic crashes and injuries in B.C. For more information visit [www.BCAATSF.ca](http://www.BCAATSF.ca) or call 604-298-5107.

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